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Sincerely,  
Frances Jane Leathers  
May 19, 1947











Buildings left to right: McMillan's Saloon, J. S. Moore & Co., Dr. Murdock's Drug Store, Mayes Saloon, Jake Shapiro, Holloway & Sons, S. D. Colbert One Price Store, Duncan Dry Goods, Avery Duncan's Grocery, (Street), Wm. Hub Gill.

THROUGH THE YEARS  
A Historical Sketch of Leon County  
and the Town of Oakwood *Texas*



By  
FRANCES JANE LEATHERS  
Oakwood, Texas

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
OF  
FORT WORTH AND ALLEN COUNTY, TEXAS



THROUGH THE YEARS

A Historical Sketch of Leon County  
and the Town of Oakwood

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by  
FRANCES JANE LEATHERS  
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Oakwood, Texas

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*Illustrated*  
*by*  
*Forest Hertel*

Sender 15.00





Dedicated in Memory  
of  
My Darling Daddy

### HOW DO I LOVE THEE?

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.  
I love thee to the level of everyday's  
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.  
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;  
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.  
I love thee with the passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.  
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,  
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,  
I shall but love thee better after death.

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

## PREFACE

The primary purpose of writing this booklet was the preservation of a folklore unique and dear to those who have lived in its midst. Lest we forget those stories, legends, events, and characters that have been the blood stream of existence to Leon's citizenship, I have tried to represent some of them partially on paper.

My data has been obtained chiefly by listening to the long tales of my elders sitting around a campfire in midwinter, or swatting mosquitoes and fanning flies on one of Leon's numerous lakes in summer, or just squatting on bended knees on the town sidewalk whittling on a piece of wood and spitting juice from a wad of tobacco packed firmly in the lower jaw, or perhaps passing a choice bit of gossip via the "grapevine" until within thirty minutes the entire town is well informed on the much enlarged story.

However, a great deal of my material is not just "hearsay," and I am particularly indebted to the late Judge W. D. Wood who carefully set down in printed forms historical dates and events important in early Leon County history; to the late Mrs. D. W. Moore who accurately recorded historical events of early Oakwood in chronological order; to Mrs. T. P. Berryhill, one of Oakwood's first citizens and who still lives today; to "Uncle Henry Lacy," who was born a slave



and who lives today passing on to us a bountiful store of early history concerning the pioneers, traditions, customs, and beliefs peculiar to a civilization living on the west bank of the Trinity River; to Mr. C. G. Haley and Miss Essie Hill who contributed important information on service personnel of World War II; to Mrs. Bennie Hardin for the use of Mr. Webb Tubb's album; to Forest Hertel, an Oakwood High School boy, for the sketches included within this book; and to a score of others mentioned throughout the book.

FRANCES JANE LEATHERS

Oakwood, Texas

March 30, 1946

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## CHAPTER I

### BACKGROUND OF THE COUNTRY

SPAIN was the first European country to lay claim to Texas, and as early as 1519 the Spaniards had in their possession maps of the coast of Texas. They gave to the newly-found land the name "Amichel." Little was done to colonize the new country until La Salle and a group of Frenchmen came into East Texas, and in order to keep the French out, the Spaniards built missions. These missions lasted only a short time and it was not until St. Denis, another Frenchman, made his way to Texas that the Spaniards attempted to build permanent colonies in Texas, this time founding San Antonio.

El Camino Real, better known as the "Old San Antonio Road," connected Texas with the United States. It was blazed in 1691 by Capt. Don Domingo Teran de los Rios, first provincial governor of Texas, and passed through Leon County, then a municipality, at the present site of Normangee.

In 1774 the Spanish colonists returned to East Texas after preceding evacuation and established a fort, Pilar de Bucareli, Presidio, on the Trinity River in present Madison County, but only a few thousand Spaniards came to Texas and most of the land belonged to the Indians.

In 1821, Texas under Mexico began a wide colonization, and it was during the period from 1821 to 1836 that Austin brought his group of Americans into the country. The Americans, for the greater part, settled in the eastern regions of Texas while the Mexicans settled near San Antonio. For a greater part of the time the settlers lived at peace with the Mexicans, but in the end became engaged in a bloody, ruthless war, and were led to victory by General Sam Houston.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY INDIANS OF THE REGION

THERE were numerous aboriginal Indians in Texas, but the Indians that we are interested in are the Cherokees, Kickapoos, and Keechies who invaded the Trinity region after the aborigines had become extinct.

The Cherokees were a tribe of Indians of far greater intelligence than the average North American Indian. Just when they entered Texas from Arkansas and northern Louisiana is not known, but we do know that in 1822 their leader, Chief Fields, was in Mexico City for the purpose of obtaining a clear title to the lands in East Texas on which his people had settled.

The Cherokees were given squatter's rights, but they continued to ask for a written treaty.

With the revolt of the Texans against Mexican authority, the Cherokees arrived at an agreement with a committee representing the temporary Texas government and having Sam Houston as one of its members. By this agreement the Cherokees were to receive the land lying between the Sabine and Angelina Rivers and north of the "Old San Antonio Road." This was early in 1836 and prior to the battle of San Jacinto. After Texas had established its independence of Mexico the Senate of the new Republic refused

to ratify the treaty made by Houston and others.<sup>1</sup>

The Cherokee Indians had abandoned the tepee and lived in log homes, cultivated crops, had schools, and a rude alphabet. At the end of their year, they burned all rubbish, cleansed houses, fasted three days, and took purgatives. All crimes but murder were pardoned that they might commence the year free of sin. Feasting and dancing announced the new year. They ate from pottery dishes and supplemented the game they killed with corn, squash, and beans.

In an issue of the *Cotulla Record* was an account of a Cherokee Indian on the method used by Indians of olden times in poisoning their arrows for war purposes or for killing bear and deer. According to the article, they took fresh deer liver, fastened it to a long pole, and then took it to a place they knew abounded in rattlesnakes. About midday the rattlers were all out of their dens and coiled up in the sunshine. The Indian bucks would poke the first rattler with the liver on the long pole, and the rattler, unlike common snakes, always shows fight in preference to escaping. The snake would thus repeatedly strike at the liver with its fangs until its poison was all used up, whereupon it would quit striking and move slowly on. The buck would then hunt another rattler and repeat the process until the liver was full of snake poison. Then the pole was carried home and placed in an upright position

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<sup>1</sup>*Texas Almanac*, 1941-1942 (Dallas, 1942).



until it was dry as a bone. The liver was pounded into a powder and placed in buckskin bags, to be used as needed for arrows. This powder would stick like glue to any moistened surface.

The Kickapoos, an Algonquian race originating in southern Wisconsin, had a permanent encampment on the west bank of the Trinity River, in the vicinity of a place now known as Kickapoo Shoals. The village was located on land included in an eleven-league grant made to Ramon de la Garza, May 7, 1831. Every vestige of the encampment had disappeared by 1850. The Kickapoos were expelled in 1839 and eventually made their way into Coahuila, Mexico, under their chief, Wild Cat.

A missionary speaking of the Kikapus in Coahuila, Mexico, says, "It is a pre-Cortezan American. They are a proud race and have conserved 95% of their customs, ideas, religion, government, spirit of warfare, which they now take out in hunting. They hate the White Man. They use bows and arrows and look upon schooling as a means to learn evil." They keep rigidly to themselves and even when far from home, they hold themselves as though they had never known a master.<sup>2</sup>

These mountain people were expert at ambush, traveled light, and most of them were never conquered.

The Keechie tribe had a village on the Ramirez

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<sup>2</sup>Chase, Stuart, *Mexico* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 25.

league of land, about two and a half miles north of Centerville, the present county seat of Leon County, near the hills on the upper edge of a bottom prairie that extended down to Little Keechie Cheek. Springs furnished them a supply of pure water. The prairie soil was fertile and probably produced well the favorite crops of corn and beans.

The location of land in the eastern and central parts of Leon County caused the Keechies to remove from the village on Little Keechie to the Navasota River in the western part of the county. The Keechies were strong in their professions of friendship for the whites. At the same time they engaged in constant thieving expeditions. Confronted with the evidence of their depredations, they laid the blame on other Indians. It is also well to remember that these Indians had long been supplied with European firearms by French and Spanish traders who also furnished them with ammunition.

In 1835, the population tired of the Keechie depredations, Colonel Coleman was authorized to raise a company and go to the Keechie village and induce them, if possible, to discontinue their thefts. As he approached their camp they took for granted that his intentions were warlike, and they chose a strong position and fortified it by digging pits in the ground, to which they could retreat when attacked. Being on the open prairie Colonel Coleman and his men were unable to rout the Indians from their position and withdrew

from battle to return with reinforcements in a few days under Colonel John H. Moore. The Keechies were advised by their spies that the whites were coming with reinforcements and abandoned their trenches and fled. The Texans followed them out beyond the head of the Trinity River, where they discovered their camp. They thought the Indians were there and charged upon it, but found only two warriors, who were killed, and women and children, who were taken prisoners. The Keechies were never heard of again but were probably absorbed by other tribes.

The Indian always regarded the white man with awe and called his compass "land stealer." Today we still find arrowheads and spearheads lying promiscuously about in wooded areas where the warrior fought his battles or killed the game for food. The weapons were made of firm stone chiseled into shape by heating them and dashing them immediately into cold water, thus making it possible to flake off bits of the stone until the Indian had obtained the desired shape.

There is an Indian legend about a group of men, among them C. C. Goodman, who were riding through the country one day when one of the men spied a squaw high in a tree. One of the boys suggested shooting her down, but the others implored him not to do it. However, he disregarded their advice and shot her down anyway. When they had gone about a mile, they were overtaken by the Indians,

who demanded that the murderer be pointed out. Seeing they were outnumbered, they did so, and the Indians shot him, split him open, and filled the body with black pepper while the remainder of the group stood looking on in awe.

Another time Goodman<sup>3</sup> stopped at a farmhouse and found that the Indians had been there first. The Indians had scalped the mother and little girl, but the little boy escaped unseen and hid himself in a barrel of feathers until his father returned home from his day's work.

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<sup>3</sup>Goodman is believed to have been among the Texans who escaped from the Mexican prison at Salado, were captured, and drew lots to live from a jar of black and white beans.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE TEXANS AND A NEW REPUBLIC

IN JANUARY, 1831, the state land commissioner, Francisco Madero, advertised plans for commencing surveys and the issuing of land titles to settlers on the Trinity River. Mexico was unaware that she was inviting a colonization to Texas that would never accept the Mexican government, religion, or ways of life. It was not a colonization of riflemen to protect her colonists from the Indians, but one which would Americanize the country and bring it into the Union.

At the time of the Texas Revolution there were few permanent white settlers north of the San Antonio Road between the Trinity and the Brazos. Fort Parker, in Limestone County, had suffered a massacre by Indians in 1833, and the settlers had fled across the Trinity River.

Early land grants in the Brazos-Trinity region had been made to Manuel C. Rejon, Maria de la C. Marquez, and Pedro Pereira in 1833; and to Jose M. Sanchez, S. M. Marshall, K. Midkiff, Isaac J. Midkiff, Shelton Alphin, Adeline Jacques, William Johnson, N. S. Allen, Allen Dimery (a free negro), Manuel Skinner, Alse Garrett, Jose M. Viesca, John Scritchfield, Thomas H. Garner, Elam W. Gilliland, Allen C. Bullock, James Riley, M. B. Thomas, Mark

Copeland, Robert Rogers, and Benjamin F. Whitaker.

In 1822 Elisha Clapp<sup>1</sup> and his wife, Rebecca, had come to Texas, settling at the old stockade, now in Houston County near New Austonio. He built a ferry on the Trinity River where the "El Camino Real" crosses which was known as Clapp's Ferry and the land about it was known as Clapp's Prairie. This ferry played an exciting role in Texas history when the entire citizenship of East Texas fled across the Trinity escaping the advancing armies of General Santa Anna. After the excitement of the "Run-away Scrape" many of the returning settlers made their homes near the ferry, also known as Robbin's Ferry, and it became an important trading post.

In 1837, Robertson County, named for Sterling C. Robertson, was created from Milano County, and organized in 1838. It included the area now known as Leon County. In order to protect such settlements as might be made in this region north of the San Antonio Road, a company of rangers were headquartered at Old Fort Franklin, and Captain Chandler was in charge of the organization. Also a company, under Captain Greer, were headquartered at Old Fort Boggy about 1840. This blockhouse was built on the north bank of Boggy Creek and was built two stories high with the upper story extending over the lower in order to prevent the approach of the invader to the lower

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<sup>1</sup>Elisha Clapp served as a captain in the Battle of San Jacinto and is buried in the Clapp Cemetery nine miles southwest of Crockett.

floor. With two well fortified forts and ample frontier rangers, the last barrier for settlement was removed from Robertson County.

The settlement of Roberston County was the same as that of any other county or municipality. Texas was a haven for the American who had been driven from his farm because of a ridiculous mortgage system or the Englishman who disapproved of the Corn Laws or the partisans of Daniel Boone who followed Adventure. Everywhere throughout the states could be seen signs hanging in shop windows—"G. T. T.," Gone to Texas.

The Texan was another Daniel Boone. The mountains of Tennessee, the convulsive society of Missouri, the aristocracy of Virginia, the lowlands of Georgia all contributed the ingredients that went to make up Texas—to make up Robertson County. They were farmers, criminals, adventurers, missionaries. They were Protestant in religion, contrary to the Mexicans who were Catholic, and staunch and devout Democrats. These early settlers were individualists who followed only the strong. They accepted as their home a country in which there were no laws and in which "the questioning of one's veracity was an invitation to shoot it out." Texas was a tough frontier where "bad men killed for sport in open daylight" and "desperadoes swarmed in bands and ruled whole tracts of country."

In 1834, a steamboat was ordered for the Trinity

(one already operated on the Brazos). Landings soon dotted the east and west banks of the river from which the East Texas citizenry could ship their cotton, corn, cattle, and skins to New Orleans in exchange for machinery, farming implements, household goods, flour, coffee, etc.

The port of Alabama on the Trinity River was founded in the thirties by Jacob Albright. It was a landing point of some importance and was so named because of the large number of colonists coming from Alabama State and disembarking at this point. Here was established Trinity College, the first institution of higher learning in Houston County. Its charter was granted on January 30, 1841, by the Congress of the Republic of Texas. Up until this time there had been only four small schools in this area, and the colonists sent their children back to the states to be educated. With the establishment of Trinity College, the young gentry were able to receive their education at home.

In 1841 Colonel Alexander Patrick landed with his family at Cairo, a river port named for Cairo on the Mississippi River, which was founded by Captain Chandler and the Rogers family. At about the same time Navarro, the river port in the northern part of Leon County, was established by Captain J. J. McBride, John J. Goodman, and William Little. Other steamboat landings were Commerce, Brookfield's Bluff, and Trinity City.

It took seven weeks by oxcart to bring in goods from Houston via Navasota, so the colonists organized a stock company for shipping in supplies by boat. Captain Webb and his steamer *Reliance* were familiar sights to river dwellers in 1847, and a steady river traffic was carried on by two boats that were in operation. Large warehouses stood on the banks of the river, but today scarcely a sign of the towns can be found, though the records show the townsites with the lots marked off.

In 1840 and 1841 many families settled near Fort Boggy. The Greers, the Middletons, the Burnses, the Taylors, the Patricks, and the Stateys were among the earliest settlers of the old fort. Before the middle of the decade came Colonel John Durst, Henry J. Jewett, James Fowler, William Evans, Onesimus Evans, Riley and William Wallace, the Marshalls, the Kings, E. Whitton, Sam Davis, Thomas H. Garner, McKay Ball, Dr. A. D. Boggs, Moses Campbell, William Pruitt, Thomas Thorn, P. M. Sherman, D. C. Carrington, J. M. McBride, John J. Goodman, and William Little.

Moses Campbell opened the first store at Fort Boggy. Riley Wallace, who built the first grist mill in the county near the Fort, was also the first postmaster. Thomas H. Garner operated the first sawmill on a branch of Beaver Dam Creek. Elisha Whitton had very early built a grist mill at Cairo.

Although the Kickapoos, Keechies, and Cherokees



had been expelled from the country, the danger of Indian attacks and massacres was forever present. In 1841 the son of Stephen Rogers was killed by Indians who set on him while he was swimming in a pool near his home. In the same year Captain Greer, the commander of Fort Boggy, and two or three companions, who were exploring Upper Keechie Creek, were attacked by a band of ten mounted Indians, who swooped down upon them from a line of timber along the margin of the creek, as the whites were crossing a small prairie. The Texans spurred their horses to shelter, but Captain Greer, being poorly mounted, was overtaken and shot to death with arrows. His companions escaped, made their way to Fort Boggy, and, with assistance, returned the next day for the body of Captain Greer.<sup>2</sup>

It is said that the settlers were afraid to burn their lights that night for fear of more attacks, and persons sat up with the body in the dark.

A ferry license was granted to John Shipler for the Magnolia Ferry on the Trinity River, and a 20 by 32 foot courthouse was ordered in January, 1847, to be ready for use by May. The post office was established in March, 1847, but a store had been there since 1843.

A copy of a map of Texas,<sup>3</sup> made by Stephen F.

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<sup>2</sup>Wood, W. D., *History of Leon County*.

<sup>3</sup>This map is in the possession of Mrs. H. H. Brown of Centerville. It came into her possession through Judge James A. Brown, early county judge and surveyor of Leon County.

Austin probably about 1840 and published by H. S. Tanner of Philadelphia, shows the early land grants, streams and rivers as they were known then, a few towns, and something of the nature of the county. This map was known as "General Austin's Map of Texas" and was printed in colors.

What is now Leon County is shown on the map as a land grant made first to Austin and Williams, and then to David G. Burnet. To the west of this area a notation on the map says: "Wild horses and buffalo." Other areas are shown as having "Immense herds of buffalo" or "large herds of cattle and horses."

The only town shown on the map in this area is Franklin, which is in Robertson County. Waco village is shown as well as Alabama village. The Trinity River is shown with its Spanish name, "Rio Trinidad."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>*The Buffalo Press*, April 2, 1936, p. 3.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CREATION OF LEON COUNTY

IN THE SAME YEAR that Texas was formally admitted into the United States, Leon County came into existence by an act of the State Legislature, at the instance of McKay Ball, Fort Boggy resident and member of the Legislature from Robertson County. The creation of Leon County was an act of Texas' first legislature, as distinguished from the Congress of the Republic, which it replaced in 1846. From the time of their coming to Leon County, the settlers had been governed in their local affairs from Franklin, the county seat of the huge Robertson County.

McKay Ball was responsible for the adoption of the name, "Leon," for the newly organized county, the name having been derived from Leon Prairie, which in turn took its name from the Spanish word for lion, "leon," a yellow wolf.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Horatio Durst, in his eighty-seventh year and shortly before his death in 1928, made the statement that his father, John Durst, who came to Texas in 1844, had killed the lion near their homestead on the northern edge of the prairie, and that the naming of the prairie arose from that instance.

Many sources differ as to the naming of the coun-

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<sup>1</sup>Wood, W. D., *History of Leon County*.

ty. Some say the name was taken from Martin De Leon, an early empresario, but we know that De Leon never penetrated this region, and it is improbable that we should have named our county for a man whose name was almost totally unfamiliar to our ancestors.

Leona, which was at that time the center of the population, was made the county seat of the new county, and the first session of district court opened there October 12, 1846, with R. E. B. Baylor, a widely known Texas educator and jurist, as the presiding judge. Thomas Johnson was the district attorney and William B. Middleton the sheriff. The other officers of the new county were I. P. Reinhardt, county clerk, and David M. Brown, chief justice. Onesimus Evans was the foreman of the first grand jury, which returned only two indictments at this first term of the court.

Records of the district court from its first session are still preserved. It began its first duties on a manslaughter charge growing out of the fight over the county seat. The record of the first court reads as follows:

Be it remembered that on the second Monday in October, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and forty-six, the twelfth day of said month, there was begun and holden the district Court for said County of Leon, at the courthouse thereof in the town of Leona. Present the Hon. R. E. B. Baylor, Judge of said court, William Keigwin, clerk of said court, William B. Middle-

ton, Sheriff. On motion of Thomas Johnson, Esq., District Attorney, and it appearing that the "venire facias" returnable to the court was issued without the seal of said court or the private seal of the clerk of the same, it is ordered by the court that the same be requested; and it was further ordered by the court that a "venire facias" issue returnable instanter; and it was done.

The first grand jury was composed of the following citizens: Thomas Middleton, Thomas Thorn, Granville Nelson, Madison Langham, Albert Rogers, George Allen, George Service, James Johnson, Jacob Langston, Onesimus Evans, John Copeland, Marvel McFarland, Willis Wallace, George Toby, Zoroaster Robinson, Joseph Copeland, Thomas R. Thurman, Christopher T. Ditson, Robert Rogers, and Stokely Choat. This grand jury found only two bills: one for manslaughter and another for assault and battery. Evidence was heard in charges of card playing, illegal burying of a slave, and a challenge to fight a duel.

The first petit jury was composed of Aaron Kitchell, Clay Cobb, James Bloodworth, John Kinney, William Murrahly, Jackson N. Jones, William King, Washington C. Barfield, Paschal C. Langham, James M. Langham, Samuel Duckworth, and Martin D. Taylor.

The population of the county began to spread from Fort Boggy and Leona all over the county, and by 1848 there was such a clamor to move the county seat from Leona to Centerville—then spelled Centre-



ville—which was almost geographically in the center of the county that an election was called. The electorate after a hotly contested poll decided to move the county seat and in 1850 it was moved to Centerville, which is the present-day county seat.

The organization of Leon County occurred the same year of the admission of Texas into the Union and probably for this reason there was a great increase in population. Annexation offered a guarantee of a stable government under the protection of the United States military.

By 1850 Leon County had 621 negro slaves; by 1855 this number had increased to 1,455, with a value of \$757,296, which was \$300,000 more than the assessed valuation of all the taxable land in the county in 1855. By 1870 the total population of the county had increased to 6,523. Ten years later it had nearly doubled to a total of 12,817. In 1890 the population was 13,841. The great increase during the quarter century following the Civil War can probably be accounted for by the disruption of the older South by the war.

In 1851 W. D. Wood and his brother came to Centerville, and having no other means of making a livelihood, they began publishing the first newspaper known to this area. They had ordered a Washington hand press and after many delays and mishaps it had been landed at Cairo, and a short time later installed in Centerville. This newspaper was a great novelty

to the people, and everyone anxiously awaited his weekly copy. Sometime later the Wood brothers sold out to Morris Reagan (brother of John H. Reagan) and John Gregg.

The problem of transportation in early Texas was an important one. Many of the early settlers came by boat from the Old South to New Orleans or Galveston and continued their trip by coming either up the Trinity by boat or up through central Texas to Bryan by ox wagons. Upon arrival then there was the question of how to export their goods to market and import the necessities which were few, as each household was almost self-sufficient. There were steamboats operating up and down the river in the spring and winter, and in the dry seasons it was necessary to go by oxcart. This was an irksome way to travel, for it took about six weeks over cumbersome, deep-rutted lanes to make the trip. Peddlers frequented the countryside, and it was not necessary to leave one's home to purchase a yard of calico or have the family portrait snapped.

While the cotton and other produce were shipped southward to Galveston and Houston, the cattle were sent northward along the Chisholm Trails<sup>2</sup> to the northern railways and thence into Chicago and other cities. An account of John Christopher Irons' trip up

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<sup>2</sup>Chisholm, a half-breed Indian, beat out the first trail to Kansas City and the railroad, and all subsequent trails carried that name.

the Chisholm Trail was given to me by a member of his family:

In April, 1854, John Christopher Irons went with his employer, a Mr. Bob Green, to take six thousand head of longhorn cattle to market at Kansas City. They made their way along a Chisholm Trail which spread out for about four miles, and the cattle ranged along this trail for approximately ten miles. At night the cowboys would sit around the campfire, sometimes singing, sometimes telling stories, or sometimes dancing a jig on the endgate of the chuck wagon. The men usually wore one suit of clothes on the entire trip, and upon reaching Kansas City they bought another for the return trip. (This made it necessary for them to wear one suit for about three months—I didn't ask about the underwear.) The cattle carried various marks and brands. Some of them were branded OL, SV, and J flattened loop. If a stray cow were found along the way, it was carried along in the herd until they reached Kansas City, where it was returned to its owner, having been identified by the brand. Some of the cattle were poor and lost still more weight as they went along in the fast trotting days of the drive, but before the herd reached its destination it was slowed to a walk and the cows regained weight on the rich grass and plentiful water from the streams. Along the trail could be seen bones bleached white in the summer sun, and those too slow to keep the pace often fell behind to fall victims of the Indian's arrow

or some winged scavenger. There was always the danger of the herd stampeding. Often the cowboys sang as they rode with the herd in order to accustom the cattle to foreign noises and to pacify the herd. The flash of lightning or the sound of an Indian's war cry could put them into a frenzied, mad run in a second. The men had to change horses often, because the fast pace under the weight of the rider soon tired the mount. It was early one May morning, just across the Kansas line, that the men changed their horses for the last leg of the trip. John Irons' horse was one of high spirits. When he had mounted it, the horse began to charge and rear straight into the air. Before Irons could jump to safety, the horse had fallen backward to the ground, ramming the horn of the saddle through its rider's chest. It was three months later that his wife learned of John's death from the returning men. Today his body lies in an unmarked grave along the Chisholm Trail—a monument to the courage and bravery of those early Texans who blazed the cattle trails to the North.

The first school in Leon County was located near the Durst and Pruitt homes, on Rocky Branch, near Leona. The first teacher was an Englishman by the name of Scott, who was engaged to teach the children of these two families. The first town school and the second school of any description was located at Leona and was taught by William Keigan. The first school at Centerville was taught by H. A. McWhirter in the rear of his store.

One of the early teachers in the county was Captain J. E. Anderson, whose teaching career in Leon County covered a period of about fifty years.

It was not until 1882 that the state public school system was organized.

Leona had the first church in the county. Elder Z. N. Morrell, a missionary of the Baptist Church in the Brazos-Trinity area, organized a Baptist Church at Leona shortly after the original settlement of the region. Under the leadership of the Reverend Mr. Nash, the Reverend Mr. Create and others, this organization had great influence on religious life in the frontier county.

A Methodist Church was organized shortly. It was difficult to determine which was the more popular of the two.

W. D. Wood, writing in 1901, referring to early religious life among Leon County pioneers, left the following description:

While the Baptist Church preponderated in the neighborhood at the time the church was open to all denominations. Once a month a good and truly pious old Baptist minister, by the name of Coker, mounted his horse and came down to minister to the spiritual wants of the village and vicinity, without fee or charge. I can now hear, ringing in memory's chambers, his fervent petitions, in which he invoked all the blessings upon the little town of Centerville and the "invicinity thereof." In the honest simplicity of his soul, he



would often thank the Lord that "he was sent all the way from Alabama to preach to the heathen here in Texas." There was another preacher, the Methodist circuit rider, Parson Wright, who preached in the village church during his monthly round. The writer heard him preach first in December, 1851, in a little log schoolhouse, with puncheon floor and split log benches, located in the woods about five miles from Centerville. His congregation consisted of a dozen or more, and the surroundings were of the most primitive character, but these things had no effect on the man. The work of this good man in that early day was not one of ease or profit. His circuit comprised some half dozen counties. He traveled on horseback, with Bible, hymn book, blanket and saddle bags and change of linen, when he was so fortunate as to have a change. He was a God-fearing, pious and exemplary Christian man. He, too, has been dead for many years. He never had an enemy, and his death was mourned by all who knew him.

## CHAPTER V

### UNFORGETTABLE CHARACTERS

MAJOR JOHN DURST, a native of Arkansas County, Missouri, was one of the most notable characters of Fort Boggy. He was left an orphan at an early age, but made his way to New Orleans and later became a protégé of a Major Davenport. Having acquired business experience and learned the Spanish language under his mentor, in 1823 Major Durst was sent to Nacogdoches, where he was soon placed in charge of the entire business interests of his company. He is said to have been the first American resident of Nacogdoches. When Texas was joined with the State of Coahuila, Major Durst became a member of the legislative body which held its sessions at Monclova, Mexico. In one of the sessions Major Durst learned that Mexico planned to wage war against the Texans, and he escaped the Mexican officials, who had orders to hold all Texas representatives as a means of surprise to the Texans, and traveled the 960 miles to Nacogdoches to warn his people. In 1844 Major Durst purchased a tract of two thousand acres near Leona from Allen Dimery, a free negro. He then moved his family and a large number of slaves to the Dimery tract, where, until his death in 1851, he resided in a large rock house.

Mrs. Harriet Durst, the wife of John Durst, was a woman of rare intelligence and great force of character. In her seventy-seventh year she wrote an interesting account of the early days in Texas in which she stated: "We came to Texas in the spring of 1827, shortly after the difficulties with the colonists and Mexicans, called the Fredonian war. . . . My father, Col. John Jamison, was Indian agent in Louisiana for many years." She died in 1888.

Henry J. Jewett, a lawyer, was one of the early settlers of the county and attended, as a member of the bar, the first court held in the county. When the thirteenth judicial district was organized in 1853, he was elected district judge and served until shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War, when he was defeated by John Gregg. When Judge Gregg resigned to go into the army, Jewett was elected to the vacancy. Shortly after this his mind became deranged, and he was compelled to resign. He wandered away from Leon County and at the close of the war was in Matamoros, Mexico. Later the report reached his friends in Leon County that he had escaped from an asylum in New York City and drowned himself in the North River.

William B. Middleton helped build Fort Boggy about 1840, and was a member of the Minute Company. Middleton volunteered as a member of the ill-fated Mier expedition and was among those captured by the Mexicans. He was fortunate in the drawing of the

beans. Upon his release after a hard career as a prisoner of the Mexican government in Mexico City, he returned to his home in Leon County, where he was shortly elected the first sheriff of the county. He served several terms in the State Legislature, being a member of that body when Texas joined the secession movement. He died in 1878, leaving no descendants.<sup>1</sup>

W. D. Wood, better known as Old Judge Wood, came to this county in 1851, and it is to him that we are indebted for all the written material on early Leon County. The following is his description of life in the county:

On the 14th of November, 1851, I arrived in Centerville, the county seat of Leon. The town was then one year old. . . . There was perhaps in the county 200 or 250 voters. . . . Game was abundant. The uplands were covered with sage and other grasses from two to four feet high. The glades and bottom lands were set with a luxurious growth of gramma grass, so high that when a deer entered it his course could be followed by the opening of the grass, and occasionally his head and ears could be seen as he leaped along. Cattle and hogs kept fat winter and summer on the range. . . . A feeling of social and neighborly kindness pervaded the whole community. The advent of a new-comer was a signal for universal rejoicing in the neighborhood. . . . If he needed

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<sup>1</sup>Gates, J. Y. and H. B. Fox, *A History of Leon County*, pp. 9 and 10.

beef he was informed by an old settler of his mark and brand, and told to go among his cattle and make his own selection free of charge. . . . The coffee pot was always on the fire, and the guest soon after his arrival was invited to make himself at home and stay a week. . . . Time was no special object. . . . Kerosene was unknown and the saucer lamp and the tallow dip were the illuminants in those days. . . . Most of the cultivation was done with oxen. The farmer would plow one yoke from morning till noon, then turn these out on the grass and yoke up another pair for the afternoon's plowing.

In the summer of 1836, Joel D. Leathers, then a man of forty-one, with his wife, five children—Jane, Rachel, Nancy, Samuel, and James—and a friend named Davis, made his way toward Texas. Texas was at that time engaged in the bloody and ruthless war with the Mexicans, and General Sam Houston, fearing the Indians might attack the Texas forces at any time, urged his friend to come to Texas and live among the Indians, pacifying them until the Mexicans could be defeated and pushed beyond the Rio Grande.

Sam Houston and Joel D. had lived on opposite banks of the Tennessee River, but they often found their way to the Cherokee camp on an island in the Tennessee River. Here Chief Oo-loo-te-ka had given Houston the name "The Raven" and Leathers the title "The Human Calculator." Joel D. spoke not only the language of the Cherokees, but those of six other



tribes. He had watched the Indian in his wigwam, on the hunting grounds, in his battles. He knew the Indian better than he did his own people. Joel crossed the Sabine on a ferry, found himself engaged in a brawl with the ferryman—probably because he drank too much—and made his way down El Camino Real until his ox train had reached the stockade<sup>2</sup> on the Trinity River where Elisha Clapp and a number of other settlers were making their homes at that time. Here he remained until he was able to build himself a home.

One morning Joel D. and Davis made their way to a bee tree which they had seen the day before on a near-by creek. As they neared the spot Joel D. saw that the Indians had already been there, and he shouted to Davis to run for his life. But Davis was not quick enough, and the Indians roped and pulled him from his horse. Only by hard riding did Joel D. escape being killed. The next day he, with reinforcements, returned to the spot and found Davis' body but minus his boots. Joel D. was unable at the time to determine from which tribe the Indians had come, but sometime later as he sat about the council fire of the Cherokees, he saw an Indian wearing his friend's boots.

In 1839 he was issued land by the Board of Land Commission of Nacogdoches in Cherokee County.

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<sup>2</sup>An old blockhouse established before 1836 by Elisha Clapp and neighboring settlers as a refuge against the Indians. It was abandoned about 1844.

In 1844 Joel D. came to Leon County and lived in the Kickapoo village until 1848, when he moved to that section of Leon County known as "Egypt." Here he farmed and raised stock.

In December, 1851, Richard Smith sent him word that the bears were killing the stock, and Joel D., being an excellent shot, started out to help him. He was overexposed in the cold and contracted pneumonia. Dr. Meriweather was called, but Joel D. died in January, 1852, holding Bunk Barbee's hand as he drew his last breath. Because there were no transportation facilities, he was buried at the Old Tubb Cemetery near Hunt's Store, where also are buried his wife, Mary; his sister, Liddie Dickson; and his sons, Samuel and James. The wolves tried to dig up the bodies from these early graves, and it was necessary to rock them up for protection.

Joel D. Leathers was primarily an adventurer. He not only spanned the vast frontier of Texas, but would have been in on the Gold Rush of '49 had his wife and family consented to go with him. He was straightforward and honest, and liked his fellowman for what he was. He had little formal education, but gained his knowledge from the hard school of the frontier. The science of mathematics was innate, and he often sat Indian-fashion upon the ground while doing his calculations. He could drink a barrel of liquor without ever setting it down. He was the typical Texas pioneer.

Prior to the 5th day of December, 1839, A. B. Hardin, Jr., with his mother, emigrated to the Republic of Texas. He was at that time a single man, and he and Mrs. Hardin were coming to Texas to join her husband, A. B. Hardin, Sr.

Early in 1825, A. B. Hardin, Sr., had emigrated to Texas from Tennessee and settled on the Trinity River in what is now Liberty County. Augustine Blackburn Hardin was born in Franklin County, Georgia, July 13, 1797, and was the son of Swan and Jerusha Hardin. On January 16, 1827, he enlisted in Captain Hugh B. Johnson's volunteer company. He was a member of the First Convention of Texas at San Felipe de Austin on October 5, 1832. In March, A. B. Hardin was a member to the Convention which drew up the Declaration of Independence which bears his signature. As he returned home, he and his friends passed groups of fugitives—men, women, and children, colored and white—who sensed that revolution was in the air and were attempting to cross the rivers from which the Mexicans had already taken all ferries and boats. Mr. Hardin married in Liberty County, and it was not for several years that his wife and son, A. B., Jr., came out to Texas from Tennessee, learning that their husband and father had taken up a common-law wife in Liberty.

Before reaching Liberty A. B. Jr., learned the news of his father's marriage. He was bitter and hurt and resolved never to have anything to do with him though

he offered him a fortune. Building a home, he cared for his mother and in later years we find him operating two boats on the Trinity River, one the *Ida Reese* and the other *Black Cloud*. His father had offered to educate him, but he was still adamant, and even now when he docked in Liberty, he refused an interview with him.

Once when the waters of the Trinity were at low ebb, he took *Black Cloud* into port at Liberty, left her in care of the crew, and went off for a lark. He stayed so long that when he returned he found only the smokestack remained above the water and the termites had gone down with the boat. He only laughed and said, "Well, that's about the best death she could have died."

"Capt. Black Hardin," as he was called, gained a vast amount of land before his death, owning almost an entire tract between Oakwood and the Trinity River. He was bacchanal and cantankerous, but he was staunch, courageous, and a shrewd trader. When he died, he was buried at Lampasas, for it had been his wish not to be moved a great distance after death.

Among the early settlers also was Jim Orenbaum, a full-blooded German, who pre-empted land near Oakwood. He married Willie Little and after her death he married Widow Meadows. Eliza was born to Jim and Willie in 1856 in a log cabin near the present Negro Holy Roller Church. Eliza married Ethan Stroud.

Memory Stroud, Ethan's father, had come out to Texas in 1835 from Alabama and had settled on what is known as the Stroud Field, just north of Oakwood. Benton Stroud, his uncle, came with him. Benton Stroud contracted the building of a railroad known as the H. & T. C., Houston and Texas Central, to Groesbeck. At the same time the T. & B. V., Trinity and Brazos Valley, was being constructed. Their tracks ran side by side through the county, and each company worked furiously to complete the job before the other in order that it could be saved the expense of building an overpass where the two were to cross. The T. & B. V. finished first and the H. & T. C. was forced to build over its tracks. The whole project was an economic folly, and Benton was submerged in debts which his nephew Memory later assumed.

William Eldridge, born 1820, came to Texas in 1834 from Alabama. He traveled all the way in a covered wagon and settled at West Point just north of Oakwood, where he practiced medicine and raised cattle. He fought in the Civil War, during which time his wife died and he himself died a few months after his return home.

The Tryon family came to Texas just after the Texas Revolution and settled on what is now called Chalicombe Ranch about eighteen miles southeast of Oakwood. Every fall Mr. Tryon would go to Galveston to sell his cotton, and chose to go by ox wagon through Navasota instead of going down the Trinity



by boat. It usually took about fifty slaves and one hundred carts to carry all the cotton and bring back the necessary supplies for his family and the settlers who traded at his store. This trip usually took about seven weeks.

Mr. Joe Bannerman came to Texas from North Carolina probably about 1843 and settled on the banks of the Trinity River. He must have been a skillful engineer, for he built numerous ditches for the purpose of drainage. The longest ditch, which was called the "Bannerman Ditch," covered a distance of three miles, and there was a levee which was built with rawhides and mules to hold the river back. He cut his own timber with the broad size axe for his houses and burned his brick on the place. The big house was built of planks while the cabins for the slaves, who numbered about one hundred, were built of logs. One large building was filled with looms, and it was here that the material was spun and dyed. Each slave working in the factory was required to spin two yards of cloth a day, and it was the job of Margaret, Rose, and Culie to do this plus dying it. The cotton was scalded and pulled out fine, and then Margaret took it and put it on a large harness on the side of the wall from which it went to the wheel behind and then on to the sheaves. "Old Lady McInville" made the staves. Mr. Bannerman used to drive up two or three hundred meat hogs each year to kill for food during the winter, leaving the two-year-olds behind. There

was plenty milk and butter, and the slaves ate as well as the master. Steven Bannerman was a cowboy, or as Uncle Henry Lacy put it, "hog boy." C. L. or Charlie Bannerman was a member of Gould's Battalion, Company D, of the Confederate Army and was wounded in the Battle of Pleasant Hill near Mansfield, Louisiana, according to Uncle Henry Lacy, one of the Bannerman slaves who still lives. Charlie Bannerman was brought back to the Bannerman Quarters in 1864 where he died in February, 1867. According to Judge W. D. Wood, Bannerman, after being wounded at Pleasant Hill, was nursed back to health in the Morse home in Mansfield, La. Here he fell in love with Mr. Morse's daughter, whose name was probably Sally Morse, and they were married. Upon Charlie Bannerman's return home, he was elected to the lower house of the Legislature.

The war ceased in April, 1865, and a messenger was sent on horseback to spread the word, and though the slaves were emancipated on the 19th of June, it was not until July that they received the word in the Bannerman Quarters. Bannerman summoned all his slaves together and asked them to stay on to gather the crop and spiked his offer by giving the women two dresses apiece and the men gifts of equal value. In 1866 Bannerman made another contract with the negroes. It was during this year that the river overflowed and the levee broke. In 1866 or 67 Mr. Bannerman contracted pneumonia, and while he was ill, his

home burned. Shortly afterward he died and was buried in the family cemetery, which may still be seen today.

James Pinckney Henderson<sup>3</sup> was responsible for a large number of Leon County citizens coming to Texas, especially the Cox family and the Brady family. Mrs. Elisha Cox was a niece to Governor Henderson, and he wrote her repeated letters encouraging them to migrate to Texas. In his letters he described Texas as a land of plenty where "honey grows on trees and butter comes in ponds, and all you have to do is sop." His description of the Texas blizzards credited them with being so cold that "a frog's head would freeze before he could get it under water." Governor Henderson's people found the first description a gross overstatement in their estimation and were sadly disappointed upon their arrival.

The social and friendly feeling that existed among the early settlers of Texas was strong and peculiar. It was the natural product and outgrowth of hardships and dangers which these pioneers mutually shared that joined old Texans one to another with hoops of steel. The early settlers of Texas were generous and hospitable.

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<sup>3</sup>Governor Henderson married Frances Cox of Philadelphia, who at the time of their marriage was living in Paris, France. She studied law with her husband and mastered it sufficiently to do her husband's work. She spoke eighteen languages fluently, seven more very well, and read her Bible in thirty! She established the Episcopal Church in East Texas. After the death of her husband she returned to Europe to educate her three children. The descendants of her daughter Frances were in Europe at the beginning of the war.

They would share the last crust of bread or bushel of corn with a friend, neighbor, or stranger. They kept open house, and the latch string always hung on the outside of the door. They never turned away from the shelter of their roof or camp the stranger or the wayfaring man. They paid their debts, observed their contracts, and illustrated the highest integrity. Perhaps some of them entertained loose ideas in relation to the acquisition of land; but this . . . grew out of the feeling that they had fought for and won it, and that they committed no wrong in taking their own.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Wood, W. D., *Texas and Texans Fifty Years Ago* (1902), pp. 29-30.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CIVIL WAR

SLAVE PROPERTY was the most important possession of the majority of Leon County citizens, and for this reason the population were avid supporters of the secession movement; however there were some who agreed with Sam Houston and urged moderation. The voters unanimously passed the ordinance of secession, and recruiting began.

D. M. Whaley was one of the first to go, and was made a colonel before he was killed in Virginia. Captain J. P. Madison followed with a company, and in it Judge Robert Gould early rose to the rank of colonel. Captain J. M. Black, Captain G. H. Black, Judge W. D. Wood, Captain D. C. Carrington, and Dr. Wilson each led companies of Confederate soldiers from Leon County, in the total number, it has been estimated, of eight hundred men. Of these only one company penetrated farther east than the Mississippi River. That of Captain Whaley suffered by far the heaviest losses of any that left Leon County; only twenty men and one officer returned from this company.

W. D. Wood has written a book, *A Partial Roster of the Officers and Men Raised in Leon County*, in which he gives biographies of some of the officers and a



partial list of men serving in each company. The following information is taken from that book:

Colonel Robert S. Gould was born in Iredell County, North Carolina, Dec. 16, 1826. At seven his father died, and his mother moved to Tuscaloosa, Ala. He studied law at the University of Alabama, and in 1850 came to Texas settling in Centerville. In 1855 he married Miss Levena Barnes, daughter of Dr. P. Barnes. She was a native of Morengo County, Alabama. Colonel Gould was a member of the secession convention in 1861, and in 1862 he raised a company of cavalry in Leon County of 120 officers and men of which he was captain. Capt. Gould's company was ordered to Porter's Springs in Houston County where it joined other companies. Capt. Gould was then made a major. These companies became a part of Randle's brigade and last a part of General Walker's division. He participated in the battles of Mansfield, Pleasant Hill, and Jenkins Ferry. At the close of the war, Colonel Gould, with his regiment, were camped near Hempstead. After the war he resumed his law practice in Centerville. In 1866 he was elected District Judge but was removed by the Federal (Yankee) authorities. In the canvass for this office he was opposed by Colonel C. M. Winkler, who so greatly distinguished himself as a soldier and commander in Hood's brigade in Virginia. By a mistake in adding up the vote of Robertson County, Colonel Winkler was declared elected, qualified, and held court in one or two counties.

Colonel Winkler graciously resigned and Colonel Gould qualified.

Major Whaley was a native of Peensylvania. In 1853 or 1854 Whaley came to Centerville with a stock of goods for a Leon citizen as druggist. He was elected State Senator, and when Texas seceded from the Union he raised a company of 86 men from Leon and Madison Counties. It was organized in Centerville July 17, 1862, with Whaley as Captain, J. J. McBride 1st Lieutenant, J. E. Anderson and W. G. Wallace 2nd Lieutenants. It was called the "Leon Hunters." This company reported to Houston and was soon sent to Richmond, Virginia, where it became Company C, 5th Texas Regiment, Hood's Texas Brigade, Longstreet's Corp of the Army of Northern Virginia. In the famous charge of Gaines's Mill, Capt. Whaley displayed such courage that he was made a major. He fought in the battle of Eltham's Landing, Virginia; Seven Pines, Virginia; the seven days fight before Richmond, Virginia. His thigh was shattered by shell at Richmond and he died that night. He was buried on the battlefield.

Captain J. J. McBride was born in Rockbridge County, Virginia. He came to Texas in the 40's and settled at Navarro on the west bank of the Trinity River. He enlisted in Whaley's company and fought in the battles of Fair Oaks, Va.; seven days' fight before Richmond, Va.; Gain's Mill; Malvern Hill; Thoroughfare Gap, Va.; Freeman's Ford, Va.; Manassas, Va.; Fredricksburg, Va.; Suffolk, Va.; Gettysburg, Pa.;

Chickamauga, Ga.; Knoxville, Tenn.; Wilderness, Va. His company joined Robert E. Lee in his last stand, and Capt. McBride was seriously wounded and needed to have both legs amputated. He refused and ordered them, "Lay me back in my bunk and remember that the Yankee has never been born to kill Capt. J. J. McBride." And he lived to come home. In 1878 he left Galveston to come to Leon County on business. While he was at Oakwood (then Oakwoods) he died of congestive chills and was buried by the Knights Templars in Palestine.

Capt. J. E. Anderson was born at Rushville, Ohio, Feb. 25, 1836. He was educated at Washington College, Pennsylvania, and at Denison University, Ohio. He came to Leon County in the winter of 1858-59, and became the first teacher of the Redland School. He went to the war, but returned in 1865 and continued his teaching career at the Redland School until 1874 when he moved to Jewett. He taught here until 1894. He fought in the battles of Eltham's Landing; Richmond, Va.; Freeman's Ford; Thoroughfare Gap; Manassas; Antietam; Fredricksburg; Suffolk; Gettysburg; Chickamauga; Chattanooga; Huntsville; Wilderness; Spottsylvania; Mt. House, Va.; Petersburg, Va.; and Richmond. He was surrendered with Lee's army at Appomattox Court House in Virginia. Of the 126 men these remained: Capt. J. E. Anderson, 2nd Lt. J. A. Green; Pvts.: J. T. Allison, J. P. Copeland, H. S. Driscoll, E. W. Jones, T. R. Pistole, J. E. Swindler, H. P. Traywick, and P. H. West.

*Roll of Original Officers and Men of Company C, 5th Texas  
Regiment, Hood's Texas Brigade, Longstreet's Corps,  
Army of North Virginia as Organized in  
Centerville*

## COMMISSIONED OFFICERS:

D. M. Whaley, Capt.  
J. J. McBride, 1st Lt.  
W. G. Wallace, 2nd Lt. (Madisonville)  
J. E. Anderson, 2nd Lt.

## NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS:

Lee Tubb, 1st Sargeant	G. A. Pruitt, 1st Corporal
Z. L. Logan, 2nd Sgt.	J. T. Adkisson, 2nd Corp.
I. J. Pridgen, 3rd Sgt.	P. B. Perry, 3rd Corp.
J. C. Cox, 4th Sgt.	G. F. Border, 4th Corp.
E. W. Black, 5th Sgt.	P. K. McKenzie, Musician
H. L. Olrick, Musician	

## PRIVATES:

Jessee Anderson	A. J. Dunlap	J. G. Gough
J. T. Allison	H. B. Dunn	Marion Garey
A. B. Allison	Z. Y. Dezell	Benjamin Henry
Robt. Allen	E. M. Dezell	W. H. Hough
Z. P. Bell	J. M. Driscoll	Berry Hicks
Edward Bell	H. T. Driscoll	R. H. Hays
T. J. Boykin	W. V. B. Duncan	J. H. Hailey
B. W. Bristow	J. C. Dickson	S. W. Irwin
William Boykin	J. B. Durgan	E. W. James
E. H. Bristow	J. E. Ellis	John Caloway
G. G. Barbee	C. A. Ellis	A. A. Jones
J. H. Brewer	B. D. Elkins	Asbury Lawson
F. M. Braden	J. B. Farris	Thomas R. Lee
A. Brashear	J. A. J. Fryer	J. E. Lacey
H. W. Boyd	Thomas Foley	W. L. Long
William Brashear	J. A. Green	Lacey Lusk
D. F. Coston	J. C. Green	Emitt Mulholland
D. O. H. Coston	J. W. M. Green	D. W. Moore
J. M. Copeland	John Garrison	Sterling Moody
J. P. Copeland	Wiley Graham	G. W. Mills
J. S. Crosby	J. B. Graham	Ransom McKenzie
James Deatley	Strickland Graham	James Merideth

A. P. Moss	T. M. Robinson	James Underwood
William Murchison	Joel L. Ross	Henry C. Wych
James W. Neighbors	Joseph Rose	P. W. West
John Neighbors	E. H. Sawyers	James W. Wallace
B. D. Nunnery	B. S. Stewart	R. F. Webb
Joe S. New	W. B. Simmons	F. M. Williams
Benjamin Perry	G. A. Shillings	James Williams
B. D. Page	James E. Swindler	W. K. Williams
Thomas R. Pistole	J. D. Stephens	M. T. Welsh
David Price	J. S. Skinner	Jefferson Walker
J. H. Pool	J. M. Scott	William Watson
E. P. Parker	H. P. Traweek	C. M. C. Whaley
P. G. Phillips	C. C. Traweek	Eli Yow
J. J. Pridgen	Richard Turner	J. K. Yeldell
B. R. Perry	Samuel Thomas	

*Gould's Battalion, Company D*

OFFICERS:

Capt. R. S. Gould  
 1st Lt. D. C. Carrington  
 2nd Lt. R. B. Johnson  
 2nd Lt. R. W. Patrick

Orderly Sergeant W. D. Wood

ROSTER:

Ab Alston	Dan Bowls	McD. Copeland
John Alston	W. S. Bites	John T. Carson
T. A. Alphin	Elias Brashear	D. C. Carrington
S. T. Alebry	John Brashear	Yaro Chinski
T. A. Albright	L. Busby	John Dezell
A. L. Anglin	John Barkley	J. Durham
C. L. Bannerman	W. P. Bowers	J. S. Durham
Leroy Busey	J. G. Caldwell	R. Ewing
N. P. Barnes	Dick Cowherd	Jim Ewing
Eb Bell	C. C. Colbert	J. M. Gates
John Brady	Barney Cain	John Grissett
W. Bosley	W. H. Cozart	L. D. Goodman
H. R. Boykin	S. R. Curtis	Dick Gordon
F. S. Boykin	John Curtis	Billy Green
W. A. Boykin	John D. Cummings	George Grissett



R. S. Gould	Rom Moffit	J. Roberts
H. R. Hailey	Zan Moffit	G. Rodin
Sam Hanna	William Murphy	Fred Roberts
E. T. Henry	V. G. McGuire	L. W. Reed
Robert Holliman	Jos. Mattison	H. S. Robinson
Yancey Holliman	J. L. Moore	A. J. Rogers
S. Houston	T. McGuire	George Rollins
J. H. Hopkins	S. L. J. Newton	Antonio Sanches
Steve Horton	Alf Newsome	Leroy Simms
W. C. Hunt	T. G. Nixon	D. Scarbough
R. E. Hughs	Z. Y. Oden	T. E. Shipp
Jack Johnson	J. W. Page	J. A. Smith
John Jackson	H. D. Partick	L. Shumate
R. B. Johnson	D. Petty	Dave Smith
L. Keeling	Alf Polk	Tom Thorn
W. S. Kinney	John Perrin	E. C. Tryon
Martin Langin	Homer Perrin	George M. Webb
Lace Lusk	Wesley Page	J. W. Watson
J. Little	Reece Price	J. E. Winn
B. Makimson	R. W. Patrick	A. J. Wood
G. W. Manning	J. D. Polk	W. D. Wood
W. H. Maytum	Sam Perrin	John W. Wattman
Van McAnnely	W. R. Petty	Dave Watson

*Gould's Company E*

OFFICERS:

J. T. Heflin, Captain  
 R. B. Johnson, 2nd Captain  
 A. J. Rogers, 3rd Captain  
 Tom G. Nixon, 4th Captain  
 M. E. Robinson, Lt.  
 J. R. B. Barbee, Lt.  
 C. G. Wooten, Lt.

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS:

D. D. Watson, Sergeant	John Hennessee, Corp.
J. M. Matison, Sergeant	W. H. Little, Corp.
J. F. Mitchell, Sergeant	W. G. Brazeall, Corp.
J. B. Renfro, Sergeant	J. M. Fullerton, Musician
John L. Durham, Corporal	Jesse Mercer, Musician

## PRIVATES:

John A. Addington	Matthew Gayle	John Perrin
Joe Adams	J. F. Hallmark	H. S. Robinson
J. A. Allen	J. Hudder	George Rollins
Tom Anglin	Sol Hubble	Louis Reed
A. Brown	H. H. Hooper	Ashley Sloan
Robert Bass	A. F. Lawton	B. W. Storey
McD. Copeland	Jonathan Little	Sam Shiflett
C. C. Copeland	George W. Manning	Tom Shiflett
—, —, Cogsdale	J. L. Moore	W. E. Webb
—, —, Chitwood	George Orannies	Moses A. Waten
George Cash	Jim Permenter	H. N. Barbee
Thomas E. Diggs	H. J. Permenter	
Amzi Durham	Homer Perrin	

*Roster of Capt. J. N. Black's Co. A of  
Dismounted Cavalry, Burnett's  
Regiment, 13th Texas*

## OFFICERS:

J. N. Black, 1st Capt.  
G. M. Nash, 2nd Capt.  
J. H. Nobles, 1st Lt.  
Bruno Durst, 2nd Lt.  
Horatio Durst, 3rd Lt.

## NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS:

W. W. Coleman, Sergeant	R. M. Newton, Corporal
J. T. Proctor, Sergeant	A. S. Simms, Corporal
Tom Herrin, Sergeant	T. Reid, Corporal
Wm. Jetton, Sergeant	Wm. Proctor, Corporal
J. J. Bennick, Sergeant	

## PRIVATES:

W. A. Autrey	James Davis	James Hall
W. A. Brown	John Davis	Jim Lummis
John Brown	Nathaniel Davis	Alex Lummis
A. C. Blackleye	William Durst	Wm. Long
Wm. Black	Wm. Glover	Jim Long
James Bawldin	James Green	Romulus Moffit
Hart Bawldin	Dave Grissett	Alexander Moffit
Jesse Clark	Alf. Grissett	M. L. Monroe

O. A. Radford	Jack Rhodes	Wm. Vaughn
Rufe Inman	Clay Roden	John Vaughn
Ben Sherrod	Tom Reed	James Obanion
Jesse Pate	Charlie Reed	Luther Blassingame
James Pate	Charles Stilwell	Wm. Pruitt
Wm. Barnes	Barry Stilwell	Mart Pruitt
Elihu Newton	James St. Clair	Webb Kidd
Micager Parker	James T. St. Clair	Doctor Kidd
Curren Parker	Jesse Tubb	Doctor Brubaber
Ransom Penn	James Tubb	James Kidd

*Company D, 26th Texas Regiment, Cavalry,  
Colonel DeBray's Regiment*

## OFFICERS:

G. W. McMahan, Captain  
G. H. Black, 1st Lt.  
Lafayette Black, 2nd Lt.  
T. R. Franklin, 2nd Lt.  
G. D. Briggs, 2nd Lt.

## NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS:

R. M. Franklin, 1st Sergeant	J. W. Moody, 5th Sgt.
William M. Johnson, 2nd Sgt.	J. P. Brady, 1st Corporal
D. B. Thomason, 3rd Sgt.	Sol Kirkland, 2nd Corp.
J. E. Yeager, 4th Sgt.	J. L. Shaw, 3rd Corp.

## PRIVATES:

G. W. Cox	Whit Ellis	E. V. Hawes
A. F. Cox	W. P. Echols	J. A. Jackson
W. J. Cox	G. W. Ellis	Anson Jones
J. W. Cox	D. J. Epps	J. J. Johnson
John W. Cox	N. B. Fitzsimmons	Q. M. Johnson
J. B. Cox	William Fletcher	E. G. Lee
H. Cooper	Augustus Glissner	J. Livingston
Frank Collins	Noah Green	Wm. Sloan
T. W. Carter	John George	Joshiah Smith
W. Castles	Edward Grissett	Seaborn Shaw
James Dalton	Juan Hargis	A. L. Thompson
J. H. Evans	John Hawes	J. B. Womack
Samuel Evans	M. V. Hardin	Thomas Walton
W. T. Evans	Aaron	Wm. Whitley

R. B. Wallace	Polk Moore	J. M. Williams
W. L. Murff	Richard Murry	Sanders White
V. A. Monroe	William Murry	Benjamin Watson
C. P. Marston	W. H. McDaniel	W. Weatherford
W. R. Murry	Bart McDaniel	W. P. Yeager
Parker Moore	R. M. Phillips	James Phillips
William Moore	G. W. Parker	Geo. Platt
Jackey Moore	Chas. Schueiler	Wm. Riley
Wm. Roper	J. M. Smith	Edward Riley
Berry Robinson	Peter Tickel	J. F. Parks
Jno. Robinson	Wm. Venable	Marsh Pruitt
Mack Robinson	Henry White	—, —, Neicht
Wm. Robinson	Wm. Walton	—, —, Neicht
T. T. Sherman	Thomas Womack	W. R. Newsom
G. W. Smith	James Watson	John Nugent
Jack Snow	Robert Phillips	J. R. Overall
Lea Stegall	E. Stanhagen	Wm. Opperman
William Middleton	Jno. Stegall	J. E. Oden
William McGill	G. W. Sloan	T. P. Oden
A. J. McCandlis	David Tubb	Wm. Oden

William Brady was the last Civil War veteran in Leon County. He was born in Murphreesboro, Tenn., and at the age of twelve moved to Normangee. At the age of sixteen Brady enlisted in Colonel E. Bray's Regiment, Texas Cavalry, and served throughout the war.

In 1937 he made the trip to Gettysburg, Pa., to attend the national convention of veterans of the War Between the States.

Brady gained his livelihood by raising cattle and operating a freight line between Huntsville, Navasota, Centerville, Wheelock, Normangee, and Palestine, using an ox wagon to transport merchandise to these points.

He was ninety-six years old at the time of his death in October, 1943.

Life at home during the war went on much the same as it did before. There was a notable absence of young men in the country. While some of the parents and sweethearts mourned the absence or loss of their loved ones, many of the young girls lamented the fact that their list of young beaux was pitifully small, and some became so bored with waiting that they married the available ones who were left behind despite the vast differences in age in many cases.

A big problem that confronted the population during these four years of war was that of caring for the destitute families of many soldiers. The Commissioner's Court placed a tax of ten dollars and more on each family, but they complained eternally about it, though they said they sympathized with the movement. Then, as now, a man's pocketbook was the most sensitive part of the body. Eventually a General Aid Society was formed, and each taxpayer was required to pay his war tax in corn, meat, or money to be deposited at a designated place in each area.

In 1890 the Confederate veterans of Leon County organized the Confederate Veterans' Association, with Captain T. G. Nixon of Rogers Prairie as commander.

The war ended, and the armies of the Confederacy were dissolved, but some of those who remained at home and knew not the real horrors of war determined to fight on. About twenty guerrillas, under the leadership of the notorious Quantrell, appeared on the Centerville square ready to carry the war to the very door-



steps of Damyankee horde who had brought bloodshed and poverty upon a South who had known nothing but peace and contentment. But the band dispersed as quickly as it had organized, and the cruel days of Reconstruction ensued.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE DAYS OF RECONSTRUCTION

THE HATEFUL DAYS OF RECONSTRUCTION began in Leon County when two companies of Federal soldiers established themselves at Centerville. The Yankee camp was located about a mile south of Centerville on what is now the Bob Johnson Farm. There were about seventy-five soldiers, under the command of Captain Rinehart, living in tents. Voting was done under the bayonet, and everybody had to go to Centerville to the courthouse to cast a ballot. There was no precinct voting then because the Damnyankees insisted on supervising all voting.

In a hot sheriff's race during Reconstruction a man by the name of Conroy ran on the Federal ticket, and Bob Lacey and Henry Nobles ran for the Southerners. One free negro made his brags that he had fooled the Rebels by telling them he was going to vote against the Yankees. That night as he made his way home after dark, he was accosted by a man who asked if he would like a drink of liquor. His natural reply was "yes," and when the voice commanded him to open his mouth, he found a pistol rammed down his throat. It took the Damnyankees' cleverest Shylock to determine the cause of the negro's death, for the bullet never left the body.

This same white man shot a Yankee orderly when he found him alone, and dropped him and his saddle into a well near Raymond, polluting the water supply for some time.

Captain Rinehart, commander of the Federal troops, was a citizen of Prussia and was paid by the North to fight for their side. Too bad he chose to fight for the wrong side, for he was a likeable person otherwise. He used to make the beat from Centerville to the Trinity River and would often stop with Mary Leathers, widow of Joel D. Leathers. He proved helpful in handling her free negroes, who insisted on using her cabins and eating her food without working, and he did not seem to object when she punished the runaways by stringing them up by their thumbs. Perhaps it was because he had fallen in love with Mary's granddaughter, whom he married shortly.

In 1870 when France and Prussia went to war against each other, Captain Rinehart was recalled to his native country. After the Franco-Prussian War he returned to this country bringing to his young wife a large trunk filled with beautiful clothes, but she never wore them, for she lay a corpse the night he arrived in Centerville leaving him a baby daughter named "Mae." He later remarried, and his widow lives today in Houston, Texas.

Even when the Rebels were again allowed to hold elections, there was some trouble with the negroes. In a general election in 1880 a negro by the name of Larry

Fennell ran for Commissioner. He was elected and inaugurated, but conditions became so unpleasant for him that he resigned and left the country.

As for the State of Texas, it was put under a provisional government which lasted from August 8, 1867, to January, 1870. An election of state officials was held, and E. J. Davis was elected governor. Although General Reynolds had issued a proclamation April 16, 1870, declaring the reconstruction period ended, it was not until Davis was ousted from office that the reconstruction period in Texas actually ended.

In December, 1873, elections were again held in the State, and this time Judge Richard Coke, the Democratic candidate for governor, received almost twice the number of votes that the Radical, Davis, received. Though Davis received a smaller number of votes than Coke, he considered himself still unbeaten and refused to vacate office, surrounding himself with negro policemen and bodyguards.

On the day designated for the inauguration of officers, Democrats came into Austin from all directions and determined to camp on the grounds of the Capitol until they had seen their candidates inaugurated. A drop of the hat would have brought forth their gunfire, but their leader urged them to hold their fire till the time was ripe.

Davis had wired President Grant for United States Forces, and it was not known whether Grant would comply or not.

The whole first floor of the Capitol was patrolled by Davis and his negro policemen, but the Democrats hit upon the plan of ascending the back stairs to the second floor and holding the inauguration there. As they climbed the long flight of stairs, the heavy thudding sound of their climbing feet reached the ears of the negroes below. Leaning over the banister, the Democrats could see them huddling behind desks and behind each other. In a moment they had vaulted over the rail and were tearing the firearms, badges, and uniforms from Davis's policemen, now tossing half-naked negroes onto the Capitol lawn. Davis sat in his office still waiting for Grant to send United States Forces, but they never came, and the only reason Davis was not tossed out, as the Negroes were, was because he was an old man. The Democrats surrounded his office and waited. After four days Davis emerged from his den. His chair was dusted out, and Judge Coke became the first governor after Reconstruction.

When the "carpet baggers" arrived in Texas, they deceived and pampered the negro and soon had him loafing about the country in idleness enjoying his freedom at the expense of his former master. Southern farmers could not get the Freedman to stay at home and work. In order to feed, clothe, and educate him, the Federal government established the Freedman's Bureau, but the work of this bureau only made matters worse and harder to manage. In order to control the negro vote the Union League was organized to advise





Liquor was hard to get.

the negro for whom he should vote and what positions he should take on public questions. Finally there came into existence a mysterious and secret organization known as the "Ku Klux Klan." The members rode through the towns at night clothed in white robes and wearing tall peaked masks. They told the negroes they were "haints" from the dead of the battlefields, and in their ghostly raiment they produced great terror among the ignorant negroes. The purpose of the Ku Klux, that of "waiting" upon unruly negroes and keeping law and order, was a worthy one, but many bands of criminals committed crimes under the organization's name. There are only two possible names of original Klansmen available to us, that of Mr. Robert Mayes and Mr. Jones of Oakwood, the latter insisting that he be buried in his Klan uniform.

Not everyone resorted to such forceful means of expressing themselves against the Yankees, but one way or the other they worked the fever off. Some did much as old Captain T. P. Leathers of the Kentucky Belle did. Often at supper aboard his river schooner and when he wished to pay special compliment to the ladies on board he would "oblige" them with his favorite song, called "The Unreconstructed Southern Gentleman," and it went thus:

I hate the Constitution, and I hate the flag of blue,  
I hate the Declaration of Independence, too.  
I hate the Yankee nation and I hate it all I can,  
I won't be reconstructed and I don't care a damn.<sup>1</sup>

Or.

Jeff Davis is our President,  
While Lincoln is a fool;  
Jeff Davis rides a big gray horse,  
And Lincoln rides a mule.

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<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Yznaga de Valle made a great success with this song too, when after the Civil War, she made a career for herself in the London social world singing the negro songs of her native South.

BOOK II

THE GROWTH OF A SMALL TOWN

The days of Reconstruction over, Texas and the United States turned their interests toward transportation and communication. The eastern railways extended their lines across the continent, and with the coming of the railroad into Texas, small towns began to spring up overnight and large numbers of refugees fled from the war-torn South into a land of plenty which had suffered only a few of the ravages of war. The towns along the railroad in Leon County had almost a synonymous development, and, for this reason, only one of these towns is taken up in the remainder of this book. That town is Oakwood, lying in the extreme northeast corner of Leon County.



## CHAPTER I

### THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD AND THE EARLY SETTLERS

I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives; I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him.

—*Abraham Lincoln*

IN 1868 Dallas citizens raised a bonus of five hundred dollars and induced J. M. McGarvey to steam up the river in his craft of sixty feet long and twenty feet beam, as a demonstration of the navigability of the Trinity. Enthusiasm ran high and money was raised by subscription for the construction of a boat. This boat, the *Sallie Haynes*, named for the daughter of Dr. J. W. Haynes, was launched December 17, 1868, and made its way from Dallas downstream. It operated for some time on the river, but with the advent of the railroads in the seventies enthusiasm for navigation waned.

According to Uncle Henry Lacy a Dutch merchant named Curry built a steam flatboat at Navarro Crossing, but was never able to turn the boat in the narrow river. In about 1873 Uncle Henry saw something big going up the river as he was picking cotton, and running to the bank he saw that it was a large houseboat. Captain Black Hardin owned two boats on the river called *Black Cloud* and *Ida Reese*, one

having a side wheel and the other having a back wheel. Boats came up the Trinity and stopped at Trinity City bringing goods from Galveston.

Trinity City was a port of some importance on the Trinity River in the late 1860's. It was located where the railroad bridge stands today. Here they loaded on cotton, each person being responsible for his own cotton making the trip down the river and selling it, the price being five and six cents a pound with no sale for seed, but each owner's fare was included in the transportation fee for the cotton. Each boat carried about two hundred bales, and the transportation price was five to six dollars a bale. Little else is known of Trinity City except that Mr. George Ethan Stroud, born to Memory Stroud at Navarro, owned a saloon in the cross timbers which was called "The Lady Gay." Most saloon keepers—and they were many—found it difficult to keep a ready supply of liquor on hand, but not Mr. Stroud. Once he bought seven barrels of liquor, took it down to Cedar Creek and returned with eleven barrels.

In 1870 the River Road right-of-way was cut for the International and Great Northern Railroad, and it was graded in 1871. In May, 1872, the bridge was completed for the railroad which now extended as far as Jacksonville. The rocks for the bridge were thousand pound white rocks which were obtained from the ground near Blue Lake. The entire road was built by man power and wheelbarrows. When pay

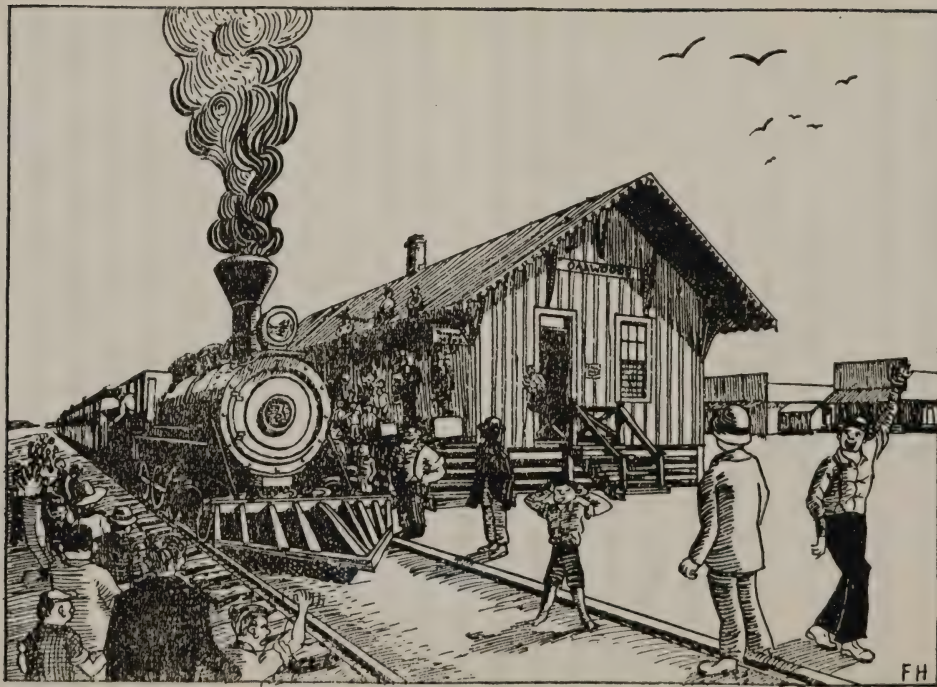
day came, the men got drunk and stayed drunk a week. Many became ill of malaria, and Mr. Tom Mayes and Tom Whitt of Butler used to send their negroes to pick up the sick so they might care for them.

The railroad completed, the I. & G. N. placed stations at intervals of ten miles along its line. Three miles from the Trinity River it selected a location called "Oakwoods,"<sup>1</sup> after the solid mass of post oak trees reaching from this location to the river, and the year 1872 saw almost the total populations of Trinity City, Butler, and Mt. Pisgah (the oldest post office in Leon County) move into the newly established Oakwood. Buffalo, Marquez, and Jewett were also established at this time.

Oakwood lay in a highly fertile valley of deep black loam surrounded by forests of oak trees and was blanketed by a coverlet of grass and sage that sometimes grew waist high. It bordered on each side of the new railroad and each citizen strove to obtain a grant of land adjacent to the tracks in order that he might face his new house in the direction which was most accessible to a good view of the locomotives that came through each day. Often the flatcars were so heavily laden with bales of cotton that it was necessary to back into town, build up new steam, and take a new start to make the grade at Cut Hill. The

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<sup>1</sup>The name "Oakwood" was adopted through usage. Apparently there is no record of the change.



Engine No. 3.



streets were deep in mud during the rainy season and were boarded over to make travel possible. In the summer the ruts in the sticky black mire had dried as hard as bricks and travel was equally difficult.

The first business room in Oakwood was built by F. B. Looney and W. C. Gorman.

A. J. Walston grew wheat to make the bread for the settlers on the Black Land prairie. He had the contract to build the public buildings, and he instructed the first school in his blacksmith shop.

A. E. Cutler moved to Texas in 1870 from Iowa and was one of the first to establish a business in Oakwoods in 1872. The Cutler family is the only family to continue to the present time in the same business. Today Mr. Walter Cutler continues to sell harness and leather goods but has supplemented his lumber business with groceries.

Mr. H. P. McCall came to Oakwood in 1874.

The Holleys first established a saloon at Navarra and the W. D. Holley store was established in 1872, the Holleys having come to Texas from South Carolina, living in Livingston for two years.

Dr. A. C. Coffield opened a drug store about this time on the corner where the bank is now located, but sold to Looney Brothers, T. B. and W. R., in 1882.

The Newkirks came to Trinity City during the war and opened a saloon.

The Knowles family, with all their possessions, came from Mississippi in 1876, shipping their live-



stock by freight and bringing with them the first piano. The only home that could be secured was not large enough for the family and this grand piano too, so the piano was lent to the Hannon family, who had a spacious home in the Liberty community. Mr. Knowles furnished hands with money, corn, tobacco, and shoes, but he charged 25 per cent on all money loaned.

John L. Perrin of Georgia came first to Mt. Pisgah and then to Oakwood, where he became the first postmaster. He was known as Major Perrin. He was an extremely large person wearing a No. 13 shoe, and his wife was an extremely small person wearing a child's No. 13 shoe. He later became involved in a post office scandal and left the country, going to Mexico.

J. W. Dodgen came with his family to Oakwood in 1877.

The following is a biography of Mrs. T. P. Berryhill as told to me by herself:

Lorena E. Berryhill, daughter of John Wesley and Jane Pope Dodgen, was born January 14, 1867, in DeKalb County, Georgia, near Atlanta.

Her father and mother had been married immediately upon Mr. Dodgen's return from the war in Virginia, he being forced to walk all the way from Richmond to Atlanta, as Grant had taken possession of all horses owned by the Confederate Army and those owned by individual soldiers also. He se-

cured a job in the shops of Atlanta, and it was here that Mr. Dodgen and his family, now two girls and two boys, lived most of the time. He was a machinist and carpenter by trade, showing great skill in his work. His boss, a Mr. Cooke, allowed him to use the tools and materials in the shops after hours, and it was here that he made a bureau that took first prize at the Atlanta Fair.

In 1877, when Lorena was then ten years old, her father came to Texas, settling at Oakwood, then a thriving town of five years. He, as most of the others, had left the Old South which was now suffering the hardships of Reconstruction, and had made his way to a new country where he could seek his fortune.

When Mr. Dodgen arrived in Oakwood, he bought a crop, consisting of twelve acres of corn and two acres of peas, from a Mr. Bruster. In 1878 when Oakwood was moved from the prairie to Wolf Hollow, a short distance away, Mr. Dodgen opened a grocery and dry goods store.

The grocery store was located in the rear of the building and the dry goods in the front. Mr. J. S. Moore, then a young man, was employed as a clerk in the grocery store. Shortly after Mr. Dodgen went into business, his wife died and Lorena, or "Rena" as she was called, had to leave school to take charge of the house. Her little brothers were helpful to her, and when her father said that he needed Rena to clerk

in the store, they were ready to take part of the responsibility of keeping house.

Lorena Dodgen was the first girl to work for the public in Oakwood. This took a great deal of courage, for in those days everyone firmly believed that a woman's place was in the home. Material and bric-a-brac had previously been scarce in the new town, but now supplies began to pour in, and the shelves of the Dodgen store were adorned with beautiful silks, lawns, batiste, and exquisite laces. The women were never able to resist the temptation of looking at all these pretty things, but they never dared to make a purchase of a woman and would have to leave the store, their eyes gazing longingly behind. Finally Rena told her father that she was doing him more harm than good and that it would be wiser to employ a male clerk, but her father encouraged her to continue in spite of the waning sales.

In 1870 the Hannon<sup>2</sup> family had come to Texas and

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<sup>2</sup>The following is an article taken from Owen's *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, III, 740-741: "Hannon, Moses Wright, brigadier-general, C. S. Army, was born in 1827, in Baldwin County, Georgia, deceased; his father was a lawyer and planter and his mother, a Miss Wright, was an aunt of Hon. Augustus R. Wright, of Georgia. He came to Montgomery, Alabama in 1847; was in the mercantile business until 1850; went to California where he remained for eight years, then returning to Montgomery. On the outbreak of the War of Secession, in 1861, entered the military service as lieutenant-colonel of the First Alabama Cavalry and a few months later recruited the Fifty-third Alabama, a mounted regiment; served with this command for some time in the Tennessee valley under Roddy and Forrest; was then placed over a brigade composed of his old regiment, Young's regiment and Roswell's battalion, both of Georgia, and Snodgrass' battalion of Alabama; led this com-

had built a spacious home in the Liberty community. As the Hannons had been a family of wealth, any merchant would have been proud of his patronage. One day General Hannon went into the Dodgen store and purchased at one time materials in the amount of fifty dollars to be made into clothes for his family. Later Mrs. Hannon was seen making purchases of Miss Lorena Dodgen. The other women's eyes bulged and they too began to flock into the store to buy the long-wanted luxuries. The sales began to soar and Mr. Dodgen soon had a thriving business.

Mr. Barkeley, though he did not wait to follow the style of Mrs. Hannon, used to make daily purchases of candy. He loved all kinds of candies and used to spend a great deal of time in searching for different colors and varieties.

In those days the young people often got together for dances and candy pulls. Mr. Dodgen had the first horse team, the oxen having previously been used, and it was in use constantly, for those who could borrow

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mand during the last year and a half of the war, serving through the Georgia campaign under Gen. Wheeler and in Gen. Kelly's division. Much arduous service was performed by the brigade and in August, 1864, under its commander made a daring raid on Sherman's rear, capturing about one hundred men and destroying a wagon-train, in addition to bringing off fifteen hundred beef cattle; followed Sherman into the Carolinas; and was engaged in the last fight of the forces in those states, at Statesboro. As fitting reward for his services, the commission of brigadier-general was issued to Gen. Hannon, but not received. After the war he removed to Montgomery; engaged in the mercantile business; later took up that business in New Orleans; and in 1870 removed to Texas where he engaged in planting in Freestone County. Married Caroline Mastin. Last residence: Oakwood, Texas."



it considered themselves quite chic if they could arrive at a party in the Dodgen buggy drawn by a horse.

It was at one of these parties that Rena, now seventeen, met T. P. Berryhill, better known as Tommy P. He wooed her, and in 1884 she consented to marry the gay young man who said he was twenty-seven, but who was in reality thirty-four, just twice her age.

Tommy P. had come to Oakwood from Florida where he had been hiding out, for he had previously been a Georgia prison guard and had killed a convict in a brawl between the convict and the son of the prison boss.

At a certain time each month, the wives of the convicts were allowed to come to the prison, and it was at one of these times that the concupiscent son of the prison boss determined to have one of the wives before her husband had his chance. The convict tried to prevent it and fought for his rights, but Tommy P., seeing that the convict was getting the best of the boy, fired on him and the convict fell dead to the floor. Tommy P. escaped to Florida and soon afterward came, via the railroad, to Oakwood.

Lorena gave birth to ten children, but because she could not get medical aid for them, nine of the ten died in infancy. She was an excellent seamstress, having supported her family in this manner for many years. So well did she sew that all parents were desirous that their young daughters take instructions from



her, and she taught sewing classes. When I told her that my mother said she had never seen anyone quite so adept with the needle as she, Mrs. Berryhill thought for a moment and then said, "I don't think I have either."

Today Mrs. Berryhill still lives and is seventy-eight years old. She stands about four feet high and is most active and energetic. She reads avidly when she is not working with her little chickens or laboring eagerly to build up her soil, which she does by cutting neat little stacks of weeds which she has pulled, root and all, from the ground and placing them side by side, pile on pile, in the marshy places. She is most meticulous about her work, has a keen memory, and when she comes to town, which is only on election day, she is the essence of neatness and cleanliness, and I should like to wager that she would be horrified at seeing the raw seams we wear in our ready-made clothes. Today she has the distinction of being a descendant of one of the first families of Oakwood and the oldest lady yet living in its midst.

According to Mrs. Lorena Berryhill, the business houses in 1877 were few, consisting of the aforementioned ones and Richardson's Drug Store, Gammage and Holley Mercantile, and Laurie Parker's Hotel. There was no flour to be had, and the people used to grind their corn into meal for bread. Their pies were made from the berries, which were very plentiful, and were placed inside a pone of bread made from the

ground corn. Later Durham wheat was planted, and Mr. Walston ground out the first flour. Wild chickens, horned frogs, and horses roamed the prairies, and the usual diet decame a good one when the settlers had accustomed themselves to it. It was easy to live, but the country was full of malaria and mosquitoes.

There was no school, but Mr. Walston held classes in his blacksmith shop, and the children sat at crude desks. One day he would have arithmetic first, and the next day it would be last. The first church was built in 1872 by Willie Hasker and Joe Parker.

## CHAPTER II

### CHANGING OF THE TOWNSITE

IN 1878 the settlers began to let their property go back to the railroad. They were discouraged and dissatisfied. They wanted to get out of that "mud lolly." The railroad agreed to give each citizen his identical lot in a new site, so they all moved bag and baggage to a townsite just west of the old one. This new site was covered with massive oaks and the underbrush was so thick and dense that one could hardly cut his way through, hence the very appropriate name of "Wolf Hollow" by which it went.

The lines of the new town were run by surveyors from the New York and Texas Land Company. The cutting of the streets was superintended by J. F. Baggett and Crawford Baggett, who came from Georgia in 1877.

There was at this time a gin located in Wolf Hollow which had been built by Mr. Walston. It was a horse-drawn affair, but a year later it was replaced by a steam engine.

In 1881 the first death came among the new settlers. Mrs. J. W. Murdock died and six weeks later, in 1882, her husband died.

The following is an article written by a friend of these two first citizens of Oakwoods:

*Death of Dr. James W. Murdock and Consort,  
Mrs. Azema Murdock*

"The arrows of death fly thick and fast  
and they seek for shining marks."

Sad indeed to think that we are called upon to record the deaths of Dr. James W. Murdock and Mrs. Azema Murdock, wife of the former. Can it be? Alas, the countenances of the good people of our town, and the tears of the grief stricken children say that it is so.

The heart beats faster, the hand trembles, the pen falters while we write the news.

Mrs. Azema Murdock, who was cut down by the all-devouring scythe of Time December 5th, A.D. 1881 at Oakwoods, Leon County, Texas, . . . aged 49 years and eleven months, of acute Laryngitis, was born and reared in the Parish of St. Mary, La., and was married to Dr. James W. Murdock on the 8th of April A.D. 1851 near the town of Franklin. Her maiden name was Azema Demaret, one of the first families of Louisiana. She was a member of the Episcopal Church at the time of her death and had been for a number of years.

As a wife she was faithful and true, as a mother devoted and kind, as a Christian she held fast to the tenets of her church. None knew her but to love her.

Dr. James W. Murdock was born in St. Lawdry Parish, La., A.D. 18. . and died at Oakwoods, Leon County, Texas, January 15th A.D. 1882, in the 53rd year of his age. He lived one month and ten days after th death of his estimable wife.

Dr. Murdock had but few equals as a physician

and his kind words around the sick bed always inspired his patients with confidence, and he was always very successful in his practice. We became acquainted with him in the fall of 1876, and from that day to the last found him all that could be desired in a friend—affable and pleasant, just and faithful and true.

His taste was refined and his judgment sound and trustworthy. He wrote several treatises on some special diseases which were held in high esteem by his medical brethren. He was a man greatly devoted to his family, and when his loving wife was taken from him his grief was deep and it seemed more than his heart could bear, but this separation was not long. Two shining lights have been removed from us, and they have left an aching void, which time can never replace. Seven children are left to mourn the loss of a dear father and mother, the youngest of whom is the very image of her good mother.

May He who doeth all things for the best, pour out his blessings upon this grief-stricken family in this hour of their saddest bereavement, and may they all live so as to meet in that haven of eternal bliss where there will be joy forevermore.

“Leaves have their times to fall,  
And flowers to wither at the north wind’s breath,  
And stars to set—but all,  
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O death.”

—A Friend

Oakwoods, Leon County, Texas  
January 30th, 1882.



The history of the Oakwood Cemetery began at the death of Mrs. Murdock. The I. & G. N. Railroad Company deeded land to Oakwoods for a cemetery, and Mr. W. A. Hearte, B. A. Witherspoon, and Dr. E. P. Murdock chose the site which lay atop a deep white sand hill overlooking the town.

Mr. Tom Ferguson, known as "Uncle Tommy," was a familiar figure on horseback at this time as he carried his mail in heavy bags from Oakwoods to Butler, his old home. Butler had no railroad, and Oakwood was its post office.

Mr. B. B. Kimble, as a boy of fourteen, had run away from his home in Florida and had made his way to Texas. He first began to fish on Glaze Lake, and each Saturday brought his catch into town, walking all the way, but if he made one dollar, he saved ninety-five cents of it. In the fall of 1880, he came to Oakwoods and worked for Mr. Pat Anders. He had a small crop in the river bottom and sold it all for \$180. He eventually opened a cash business, took Mr. Knowles' customers, and started on the road upward. He was a shrewd trader and business man.<sup>1</sup> Once Mr. Kimble nearly went broke and deeded his property to Mr. W. P. St. John, a close friend of his. Mr. St. John later re-deeded it to Mr. Kimble, thus saving him fi-

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<sup>1</sup>Kimble owned land from town to the river. Bill Woods came up to make the trade for 62,000 acres for which he paid Capt. Black Hardin \$40,000, but not in cash, for he traded him land farther down the river for it. There were no banks in those days, and Mr. Kimble gave due notes which he paid on the 3rd of each month.

nancially. Ever after at Christmas time Mr. Kimble sent Mr. St. John a barrel of flour. When Mr. St. John had a granddaughter, she was named "Kimble." In later years Kimble's Black Coon Flour took the prize at the World's Fair in St. Louis, and at the time of his death Mr. Kimble was one of the foremost millionaires of Texas.

Today Mr. Kimble's son, Kay, continues in the flour milling business which was begun by his father. He, like his father, is an excellent business man and financier, and has as his hobby a wonderful collection of beautiful oils, many of them originals.

Mr. Kimble's only daughter, Mattie, spends most of her time in her home with her little daughter, Kay, for whom she collects rare volumes, her library now surpassing probably any other private library in the state. She is particularly endeared to the people of this area for her genuine love for her old home and old friends.

Mr. J. S. Moore had come to Texas before 1872 and had settled at Mt. Pisgah with his family. In 1878 he went to work as a young man for Mr. J. W. Dodgen, who had a grocery store, and later he owned a store of his own. He bought a piece of black land sometime later, and it was here that he got his start. "Mr. Kimble," says Uncle Henry, "thought of buying the same land, but he sucked too long" and Mr. Moore got it.

Mr. Moore was a beneficent gentleman, as was his

brother, Alvin, and it was largely through the efforts of these two brothers that Oakwood was later able to build the present Methodist Church.

Mr. Moore had the reputation in Oakwoods of being a very loud snorer, and it is said that he could be heard three blocks away.

He and his wife, who was known as "Aunt Mary," were extremely nice about entertaining the young people in town. Once when a group was on Glaze Lake, "Uncle Stant," as he was called, donned a Mother Hubbard and was going to give a diving exhibition. He climbed upon the board, caught his nose, and jumped. So far so good, but the old Mother Hubbard came right over his head.

The Vans who came early to this country lived on a hill just west of Oakwoods, and according to Uncle Henry, Mrs. Van jokingly said to her husband at the dinner table, when he referred to their children, that they were none of his. Van put his knife and fork down, got up from the table, and caught a freight to South Carolina. It was a long time before she persuaded him to come home.

Captain Waldrum came to Oakwoods from Butler after the railroad came through in '72. On the way to Texas from Alabama, he saw a bear near the present site of Butler. He wanted to kill it, but his father protested since he believed it a waste of time, and said the country was full of them and he could kill them any time, but Mr. Waldrum never saw another in this

area. Mr. Waldrum upon coming to Oakwoods went into business with B. P. Hammett.

The Hammetts had also come from Butler to Oakwoods and went into the business mentioned above. Mr. Hammett, Mr. Tom Mayes, and Mr. Love had organized the first Presbyterian Church in Freestone County. There was B. P. Hammett, his son Jerry, and his three grandsons—John, Will, and Penn. Horace Whit was an uncle of the boys on their mother's side. Once Will Hagler and Horace Whit were sitting on the freight wagon at the depot waiting for the train, and along came a negro preacher and sat down beside them. Horace had no gun, but he borrowed Will's, and without saying a word hit the negro over the head. Still not a word was spoken, but the negro jumped and ran as fast as he could and never did return to catch his train.

Mr. Robert Mayes, though his father was very opposed to the business, came to Oakwoods to open a saloon. Anyone could sell whiskey at that time in quarts or sell it over the counter in smaller drinks. He made a great deal of money in this very profitable business. His wife was a highly cultured young lady whom he had met in early manhood when in school in South Carolina. Though she did not approve entirely of the method by which her husband made his livelihood, she stood by him through thick and thin and refused to let her gossiping friends comfort her when he lost \$10,000 on the Cotton Board at New Orleans.



She was a devout Christian and was a member of the society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Mr. W. H. Gammage came to Oakwoods in 1875 and went into the mercantile business with Mr. W. D. Holley. He married Miss Minnie Murdock, but died early in life leaving his wife and five children, which she reared here.

In 1880 came Mr. J. R. Mobley and his family, formerly of Butler, to Oakwoods and with them was Miss Jackie Evans who later married Mr. Tom Ferguson.

In 1881 at the death of his father, Dr. E. P. Murdock who was attending medical school in Memphis, Tennessee, returned to Oakwoods to take up his father's practice and family responsibilities. He opened a drug store and office a short while after this, and the same location has housed a drug store since then with the exception of a three-year period from 1929 to 1932 when Moore Brothers—G. S. and J. A.—moved into a double building to accommodate a drug store and grocery store.

Dr. Rawles and Dr. Looney<sup>2</sup> came to Oakwoods in 1882 and Mr. W. C. Gorman in 1884.

Mr. Jim Gorman had earlier owned a saloon at Navarro. Mr. Will grew up into a dashing, energetic young man. He loved fine horses and at one time owned his own race track. The most outstanding

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<sup>2</sup>Dr. Looney was State Representative for a long time. He was cross and overbearing, and when asked if he were not "sort of a lawyer," he shouted, "Hell, damn, no, I'm not 'sort of a lawyer,' I'm a damn good one."



thing about him was that natural antipathy for the Northerner, whom he always referred to as a "Damn-yankee," all one word. As a child one of my first recollections was passing the Gorman Store and hearing Mr. Gorman in that high, shrill voice of his shout out oath after oath at Abraham Lincoln, and Captain Waldrum affirming each statement with a shake of his head and putting in his opinion when he could. This went on all the time, and I used to wonder how they could hate Abraham so very much.

I've been told that his daughter ordered the biography of President Lincoln and when Mr. Gorman sorted the mail at the store and saw what it was, he dropped it into the wood heater and admonished her in no uncertain terms for reading such trash.

The story is told that on Lincoln's birthday years after the war, Mr. Gorman went to the bank and to his amazement found it closed. Seeing its president hard at work in the rear of the building, he rapped on the door until Mr. Wiley came to open it. "What's the reason I can't put my money in this bank today?" he shouted in angry tones.

"Why, this is Lincoln's birthday," the bank president informed him.

"Lincoln's birthday! The hell it is! You don't mean you're closed on his birthday! It just beats hell when your dad and my dad chased the son-of-a-bitch all over the United States trying to kill him, and now you close your bank on his birthday."

His granddaughter told me that when school turned out each year in memory of this great man, her grandfather always ordered her to go to school whether the doors were open or not, and she managed not to show up at home until the usual hour of her return each day. The name "Lincoln" seemed to make his blood pressure rush to its highest, but the war always seemed to be his favorite subject.

Mr. Gorman lost a son in World War I and ever afterward until the advent of the highway he had a barbeque on Armistice Day in Edwin's honor. It used to be a great affair in the life of every citizen. The flag always waved from a tall white flagpole; the music of a band filled the air; and everyone greeted everyone else while the last preparations for a patriotic program were completed. He seemed to get a great deal of satisfaction from it and so did his friends who came.

Mr. Gorman lived to be eighty-two years old and died an active man.

In 1886 the R. S. Moore family and the Heatley family moved to Oakwoods from Mt. Pisgah.

Mt. Pisgah was located just five miles south of Oakwood, and here was located an old government tannery run by H. A. Hockaday. A government licensed distillery was also operated, thus affording an accessible supply of liquor to the saloons. Here also is one of the oldest cemeteries of the county and one of the oldest Baptist Churches in the state.



Fishing on Glaze Lake.

In 1886 Captain Lane came to Oakwoods from Butler. During the period from 1879 to 1884, the largest part of Butler came to Oakwoods. Of this group were: Mayes, Hammetts, Gills, Waldrums, and Lanes.

In 1895 Mr. Henderson Hardin came to Oakwoods and in 1896 Mr. Frank Hardin came to town.

In 1897 Dr. Coleman Carter of old Wheelock, Robertson County, came with his family to Oakwoods.

The first church wedding in Oakwoods came in 1892 uniting Dr. E. P. Murdock and Miss Annie Kate Waldrum. It was on this day that Dr. John Driver came to Oakwoods and during the marriage ceremony he was called upon to attend a patron of the groom.

These and other families who came to settle in the new Oakwoods had at last escaped the ravages of the Civil War. They left behind forever the luxuries of the old régime, and here began a new life, the life of the pioneer.



### CHAPTER III

#### HOME LIFE AND CUSTOMS

THE FIRST HOUSES in the new town were built along similar lines and whenever possible faced on the railroad. The typical home had a long gallery on the front which in most cases was narrow but adequate for several chairs when placed side by side, thus making it necessary for extremities to talk at long range. There was a large hall running through the center of the house which was sometimes open and sometimes closed. There was usually a draft through this hall, thus making it a comfortable place to live. Coming into the hall was a stairway leading to the attic which usually had several small dormer windows making the room too hot in summer and in winter the heating problem made it useless, so the attic room soon came to be used only as a storage room for trunks, books, and anything else which the family did not want to discard completely, including one Stradivarius violin. On each side of the hall were bedrooms and a parlor and to the back were the dining room and kitchen. The windows of these rooms were unscreened, but were sometimes shuttered in order to keep out the sun. The floors were either bare or covered with straw matting or carpeting. This helped to keep out the cold air in winter and protect



the bare feet of the children from the splintered floors.

The bedroom suite was of walnut and consisted of a bed with a headboard reaching halfway up the fourteen-foot ceilings upon which was placed a pair of thin wire springs topped by a cotton and shuck mattress and the traditional feather bed made of chicken, geese, or duck feathers. The sheets were home-made of unbleached domestic and atop this was a Marseilles counterpane. The pillows were encased with embroidered shams and the motifs "Good Morning" and "Good Evening" were worked in a deep satin stitch on the face of them, and the pillows were propped against the high headboard making this work of art plainly visible to the guest. In summer it was necessary to stretch a mosquito netting over the entire bed to protect the sleeper from the mosquito, which was prevalent in the many ponds and branches. Even at that, few were able to escape the annual attacks of malaria. There was also a washstand which contained a lower compartment for towels, all embroidered and edged in crochet, and the marble top supported a large china washbowl, decorated in dainty flowers and pastel hues, and a large matching water pitcher for cold water, a smaller one for hot water, a soap dish, and toothbrush holder. On the floor nearby stood the chamber and lid of the same china. There was also a marble top bureau with drawers for underwear, handkerchiefs packed in

sachet bags, hose, and blouses, and a top drawer for hair pins, powdered chalk which was used for face powder, rats for the hair, and other small articles. Above this was a large beveled mirror. There might also have been a long looking glass on an easel back in which one could see the full length of her figure. There was a wardrobe which did not go with the suite but which had its place in every bedroom and was used for storing clothes, as there were no closets at all in the homes of this period. There were hooks placed promiscuously about inside the wardrobe and above the hooks were shelves on which to place the hats—the hats with the magnificent plumes.

Going into the hall again one found a hall tree for coats and umbrellas, a small combination desk and bookcase, and a hall seat. The floor was covered with the same matting as that found in the bedroom.

The parlor opened into the hall and was carpeted in a deep red Brussels carpet of a floral design. On one end wall was a fireplace tiled in green and the wrought iron andirons were rusty from use. In winter the heavy logs of post oak sent a roll of smoke pouring through the soot filled chimney. From the long windows hung ecru lace paneled curtains, and the blinds were nearly always drawn to prevent the bright sunrays from fading the carpets and the upholstery. Suspended from the ceiling was a chandelier of cranberry glass all edged in crystal prisms. Each morning it was lowered on its bronze cords and refilled

with oil. When its wick was trimmed and it was ready for use, it was again drawn up by its slender chain. Against one wall was placed the sofa which was made of mahogany and was upholstered in a crimson velvet. The back was so tufted as to give a fan effect and the crystal prisms hanging from the chandelier picked up its rich color. Nearby hung a beveled mirror in a deep gold leaf shadow box. There was a center table in the farthest corner upon which sat another oil lamp. This one was of a greenish white china and upon its base was a large red rose. Its chimney extended upward through a round shade of the same china upon which was painted the same large rose. Upon the crocheted-covered surface was also a lacy silver tray. Placed about the room were several rockers of wicker twisted into a lacy design, and upon a small table lay a stereoscope and a box of pictures already showing wear from constant handling. The piece of furniture that brought most joy to the entire family was the old organ sitting near the door. It was heavily carved and its bench was covered in a deep green plush, but the most melodious chords issued forth from that organ. At first they came somewhat spasmodically but as the pumping gained momentum, they came more evenly. A long concert necessitated several pumpers, but it afforded family and friends many pleasant hours of music.

The dining room was a large airy room but was papered in the same floral pattern of the other

rooms, having a dark green background and large red and white roses twining themselves into a symmetrical design. From the ceiling hung another prisms chandelier of pastel hues upon whose shade and base were painted spring flowers of a yellow tone. Against one wall stood a heavy mahogany sideboard above which hung a long beveled mirror in matching frame. Upon it was a silver tea service lined with gold and heavily embossed. There was also a tall silver chocolate pot of a different design and a water pitcher of silver whose shape was similar to the old camp coffee pot. There were three drawers in which to put the large white linen tablecloths and the snowy white napkins. Beneath were doors concealing the other family silver—a relish dish, a candy jar, a decanter with cut glass bottles, an extra cream and sugar, and a chafing dish used particularly for Welsh rabbit. Against another wall stood a mahogany safe with glass paneled doors and through these spotless panes could be seen some white china dishes with a small green ivy vine trailing over its surface. There were cranberry goblets and water sets of a heavy cut glass, some so old that the rough lines dated it from a period when glass came from a crude wooden hand mold. There was a tall stack of hand painted berry bowls each bearing a different flower design. On the bottom shelf was a Bavarian china chocolate set with large white roses on a green background and edged in gold. There were drawers beneath the shelves for



linens and silver. In the right drawer was a set of pearl handled silver flatware and in the left a set of monogrammed silver extracted from a hole under the kitchen of a Southern home after Sherman and his Yankees had swept through the Confederacy. Midway up the wall was a mahogany plate rail holding a dozen or more exquisite cake plates, all hand painted and embossed in gold. The table, also of mahogany, was placed in the center of the room just beneath the chandelier and was supported by four heavily carved legs. Along the walls stood twelve matching chairs for the members of a large family and its frequent visitors.

The adjoining room was the kitchen whose walls and floors were bleached from constant scouring. On one side of the room was a large wood cookstove upon which sat a large iron teakettle always brewing water for washing dishes and for the Saturday night bath, at which time the old washtub was brought into the kitchen and placed by the stove or in summer put on the back gallery. Against the opposite wall was a cupboard for staple groceries and nearby a cook table where the housewife kneaded her bread or stirred up a rich yellow pound cake for her family.

On the back gallery were several comfortable chairs, a stand for flower pots, and sometimes a cistern in which the rain water was stored. On a nail nearby hung a gourd dipper from which to drink. Years later the tin milk cooler had its place on the back



gallery too, but at this time the milk and butter were lowered into the well to keep cool and fresh.

In the back yard sat the ash hopper, a very important item in any household. It was a large tin box with a removable tray beneath it. The ashes were placed in the top and over them was poured clear water. This water soon filtered through the ashes and was caught in the container beneath. The reddish colored water, which was lye water, was then used in making soap and hominy for the family.

With the first signs of dawn the chickens began to crow and all over town could be seen small flickers of light growing into steady flames and moving about in the early morning darkness. The family was awake! The smouldering coals in the fireplace were uncovered and a crackling fire was soon kindled. The father and mother went out together to the lot, the wife milking the four or five cows owned by the family and the father feeding the horses and mules standing now near their trough waiting for their hay and corn. The children all rose early too, the girls making the beds and emptying the chambers and the boys bringing in the wood supply for the day. A fire was now roaring in the kitchen stove and the mother prepared breakfast while the girls set the table for a family of six.

All over town the thudding sound of a chopper could be heard as it pounded steak for the morning meal. In addition to steak there were sometimes fried

chicken, ham, bacon, eggs, rice, biscuit, syrup (the syrup pitcher was never taken from the table), milk, butter, and coffee. The coffee was bought while the beans were still green and was parched and ground in a small coffee grinder hanging on the kitchen wall. The milk was always skimmed and the butter was made from the top cream. At Christmas time eggs were always scarce, so it was necessary to pack the eggs in salt during the early fall in order to have them at that time for the eggnogs, cakes, pies, and cookies which everyone always had in abundance during the Yuletide and Thanksgiving. Every family killed its own hogs, rendered lard, and hung the cuts of meat in the smokehouse to be cured.

The noon meal was much the same as breakfast except for the addition of vegetables. There was a variety of vegetables always—beets, beans, squash, onions, turnip greens with meal dumplings—poke salad—which was chosen with care for at times the plant was poisonous—biscuit and cornbread, syrup, and a dessert such as custard or biscuit pudding. Cottage cheese, eaten with cream and sugar, often found its place on the table and always there was a bag of clabber left hanging to drip for the making of cheese.

At night the left-overs from lunch were put on the table and cornbread was often broken into a glass of buttermilk to make the “crumbling.”

In the mornings the smaller children all went off to school, the girls dressed in white dresses with yards

of eyelet ruffles, wide ribbon sashes and big bows atop their braids or tied to each pigtail. In the late spring the high-top laced shoes were exchanged for slippers and the long-leg union suits were taken off, but the long white stockings remained the same. The boys wore high-top laced shoes of black or brown, dark stockings, short knee pants, white shirts with a big bow at the neck, dark Eton jackets, and a dark cap to match. The men who went to their places of business or to sit on the streets talking with other men wore laced shoes with the legs of their long woolen or drill drawers tucked inside and a supporter caught tight about the leg to hold the socks in place. The pants were dark, usually with a small pin stripe, and the dark coats were worn over stiff white shirts caught at the neck and sleeves with gold cuff links and collar buttons. About the stiff celluloid collars was a narrow black bow tie and atop the head was a large black felt hat or derby. Although the cigar was not an article of clothing, it had its place in every costume.

The ladies in the mornings put on their Mother Hubbards over a clean white petticoat in which to do their work, but soon after dinner they took their bath, put on slippers or high-top shoes and long white hose, squeezed into a tight corset, adjusted the stays, and pulled the long laces as tight as possible in order to mold the waist into a wasplike line. There were six or seven ruffled white petticoats starched so stiff that they could stand alone and above the petticoats

was a satin camisole done in ribbons and laces. Their dresses, of white lawn, had leg-of-mutton sleeves, a high neck, a tight fitting bodice, and a long skirt with a bustle effect. From the knee down were eyelet ruffles and insertions of laces and the yoke of the dress and lower portions of the sleeves were done in matching trim. The hair was piled high on the head pulled loosely over a rat, and done in a tight little knot right on top. Through this was stuck a big black hatpin to hold the large white beaver hat in place. On the brim of the hat was fastened a soft white plume which swayed in the breeze when walking. The lady of this time used no make-up except for a little powdered chalk, but as she passed the mirror she pinched her cheeks right hard and bit her lips, sending the blood rushing. (I knew of one case in which the lady discovered that the red lining of her suit would fade and she soon raveled it out and used the threads to color her cheeks.) In those days it was customary to visit in the afternoons. If a lady were going out, then she chose an umbrella from the hall tree, and as she descended the steps of her home opened it to protect her pale skin from the burning rays of the sun. In her gloved hand was the gold handle of the parasol and above her was the glistening taffeta edged in ruffles.

Every afternoon the ladies went to town, all dressed in their Sunday best, and met in the drug store for a dish of ice cream or a red soda water. Here the events of the day were related and soon this kind



of meeting replaced the home calls entirely. The children listened to the grown-ups and ate their cream in silence for "children were to be seen and not heard." But promptly at five, they all lifted their skirts and either walked or rode in their buggies to to meet the evening train. On both sides of the track both black and white gathered, and at last, coming around Cut Hill, could be seen a black train with billows of smoke puffing through its large smokestack. Here it would stop to take on water and wood. Had it ever come in crooked almost the entire population of the town would have been killed. It was on one of these days that the train pulled into the station and a passenger, thrusting his head through the window, asked of an old-timer, "Do you live here, sir?"

"Yes, replied the man proudly. "I've lived right here in this same town forty years come June."

"Well," answered the man, "you're damned easy pleased," and pulled his head in and slammed the window down as the train pulled out of the station.

Everyone piled back into the buggies and saying "Good night" made their ways to the respective homes.

Although the women gathered in the evenings over a dish of ice cream, the men usually sat about all day cussing the Yankees and Old Sherman, telling dirty jokes, exchanging hunting and fishing stories, betting, and chewing tobacco. But over in some feed house, squatted upon the knees in some obscure corner,



were five or six poker players dealing the Bicycle cards in great earnest. All day long they had sat thus but never at any time were they unwatchful of the door, for had just one lady caught them at this disgraceful pastime they would not only have been ostracized from the church but from their bedrooms as well. In those days it was heresy to even mention the word "card," much less have a deck in the house.

Oakwood was fortunate to have a bounty of natural lakes surrounding it. Large parties used to take their families and go by wagon to Glaze, which was only four miles away, or to Stanmire, some sixteen miles down the river. They took supplies for a week, cots and mosquito nets, and fished every morning and afternoon. At nights they told stories.

One of the favorite stories was one Grand Noah Hunt used to tell about a family living in the lower river bottom who had living with them a ghost named "Tucker." Tucker could be such a nuisance at times, for he would turn the teams out of the lot, drink up the coffee, rattle the dishes in the middle of the night, and even get in the bed with the old man and woman and jump up and down. Tucker got to be such a nuisance that the family decided to slip off and leave him and go to West Texas. Very little was said about the trip, and one morning they rose early and slipped away without Tucker being the wiser, they thought, for he said not a word. All the way out they heard nothing from Tucker and congratulated themselves

that they had so outwitted him. But hardly had they unpacked their belongings and lay down to sleep after the long tiresome trip than Tucker revealed himself. They were disgusted—absolutely exasperated. Tucker, however, was somewhat of a prophet, and he told them that they must return to the Trinity immediately, for some of their relatives were critically ill and needed them badly. They were very grateful to Tucker for this information and they immediately arose, repacked their things and with Tucker made their way back. Everything was as Tucker said it would be, and they resolved to accept Tucker for what he was. Tucker stopped his mischievous pranks and they all lived in peace from then on.

“You don’t really believe that, do you Grand Noah?” asked one of the spellbound listeners.

“Well,” replied Grand Noah, spitting over the skillet again into the fire, “George Tubb tole me that and he whar an honest man.”

It was always with sadness that the camp was broken up. The cots and bedding were folded and packed into the wagons, and the pegs holding the mosquito bars were pulled from the ground. The fishermen tied their boats and taking their line of forty white perch took a one last look over the green lake and the moss covered trees and pulled the hill to go home.

In addition to being anglers, the male population of Oakwood were also huntsmen. They have killed

everything from a pint to a six-point deer ranging from the Trinity bottoms to the alluvial plains of the Rio Grande. The Hunts probably hold the record for that all year-round sport, but the most notorious of the group was Grand Noah Hunt.

Each year the autumn found Grand Noah polishing his guns and testing his aim for the South Texas deer hunt. The younger huntsmen who aspired to be in Grand Noah's party giggled among themselves when they saw Grand Noah emerge early on the morning of departure loaded with bags and trunks and carrying a large wicker basket filled with baked ham, stewed chicken, sweet potatoes, and the like of good vitals. But it wasn't long after the train pulled away from the Oakwood depot that the young amateurs in the sport tired of the food in the dining car and were leaning over Grand Noah's shoulder inhaling the wonderful aroma of home-cooked food or were stealing a morsel now and then from under the napkin while Grand Noah snatched a little nap. By the end of the trip Grand Noah had fed his entire party and most of the day passengers aboard the train.

The hunt lasted days and sometimes weeks. The early dawn found Grand Noah hovering near the campfire he had made some minutes earlier and the smell of boiling coffee soon enticed the others from their cots to make ready for the day's hunt. Breakfast over, Grand Noah led the way into the unfamiliar thickets and tutored the young sportsmen, who thought

they knew as much as Grand Noah but who were still novices at the old game, in the art of timing their fire. Creeping quietly through the dimly lighted thickets they at last saw drinking at the brink of the stream flowing through the narrow ravine a group of does and one old buck. At Grand Noah's signal the shotguns let go their fire and not a deer was left standing so sure had been the aims. Someone took the venison back to camp, and it was not until late evening that the other hunters saw Grand Noah making his way back into the friendly circle already telling the biggest stories in the wildest ecstasy.

If the deer were plentiful, the hunt lasted for some time longer, but it did not take these able marksmen long to clear the forests of both bucks and does.

Some of the younger sportsmen had probably wondered what else besides his bedding Grand Noah had carried in his trunks, for he didn't change his hunting suit during the entire trip, but on this morning of departure, on this morning when the camp was breaking up, they saw Grand Noah open his almost empty trunks and fill the bottoms with the hides of young does and the trays with leather strings which had lost their identity in the stripping process. The trunks were securely locked and carefully loaded atop the wagons. When the group had reached the depot, the trunks were carefully removed and stacked neatly by the tracks—close to the tracks so as to be loaded quickly when the train pulled in at the station. At



last the whistling engine came steaming around the corner and Grand Noah had a feeling of satisfaction. How glad "Muddy"<sup>1</sup> would be to get the leather strings, a million leather strings. The engine swished by Grand Noah, and suddenly he felt the impact of rushing air and flying particles upon him. Turning quickly he saw the trunks sailing through the air, torn into a thousand pieces and the leather strings and doe hides being scattered into the four winds. He stuffed his fists into the pockets of his heavy hunting coat, sighed, and boarded the train, but the doe hides and strings remained abroad unclaimed.

Swimming was always a favorite pastime with young and old and for years the old sand bar on Glaze Lake was adorned with people wearing droopy woolen suits of a dark color with stripes running about the skirts. They no doubt were cumbersome to move about in, but the better swimmers used to span the width of the lake with strong overhand strokes and perch upon the willow logs extending from the bank into the lake to dry themselves. The Gorman girls and Lena Mae Holly were always the envy of all the girls who paddled about in the shallow water with their

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<sup>1</sup>'Muddy', Mrs. Noah Hunt, lived until May, 1946, with her daughter, Mrs. Nettie Bentley, of Palestine, Texas. She passed her ninetieth birthday, knitted avidly until that time so her grandchildren would not be without warm winter socks, and recalled vividly her pioneer days in Texas with her mother, "Granny Martin", and Her Uncle George Tubb who came to the Trinity River from Louisiana shortly after the Civil War. Her ideals and love of life inspired all who knew her. She was everybody's "Muddy."



water wings and dodged the flying sprays of water coming from the diving hole beneath the magnificent willow tree from whose top the divers used to jump.

Candy pulls were a popular pastime for the young people of old Oakwood. They used to come from miles around and the washpot in the back yard was filled with molasses and boiled into candy. Partners buttered their hands, took the candy when cool and pulled it into chains of golden taffy. A prankster once took a ring of the candy and placed it in a buggy seat. When the owner discovered he was sitting on it, he rose immediately, but the sticking quality of the candy was so strong that it took the seat of his trousers with it.

Distance meant nothing when there was a play party. All the furniture was moved from the room, and, if it were to be a square dance, the caller took his place near the fiddler and called each dance—each one being different. Some of the dances went "Four in the middle, dance little Josie, four in the middle, dance." There was an exhausting number of them and at the end all sat down breathless to drink the lemonade and eat the tea cakes served by the hostess.

The Opera House held more attraction than any place of recreation that Oakwood has ever had. It was a large building owned by Mr. Charlie Blackshear with oscillating fans, portable seats, and a large stage for plays and entertainments. On the face of the bright colored curtain was "Oakwood State Bank"

and the names of other business firms. When there was no orchestra Mr. Jim Lincoln often could be persuaded to play the bass violin along with Mr. Louis Hickey on the guitar and Miss Vaden Moore on the piano. The dancers, all in their frilly evening dresses and trains, could not have enjoyed a big-time orchestra more. The chaperons were always gracious about supervising the parties, and the young swains waltzed on and on until eleven o'clock, for it was then that the light plant shut down and there were no more lights until morning.

There was a skeet range on the old Trotter place and three race tracks, one on the prairie, one in the Lammon's Field, and one at Peeler. They could race only two horses at a time, and two judges would stand at one end and two at the other. Boys often raced their horses off the tracks on Sunday also.

Bill Stableson, who was a soldier of fortune, owned several fine horses. His best one was a little brown mare upon which he would often bet his last dollar, and, strange as it may seem, the mare won him a wife. His daring father-in-law-to-be bet his daughter in marriage that his horse could outrun Bill's mare. Bill's horse won, and he took his bride. Bill lived in a small ranch-like house, but his wife always stayed in Harris County with her mother. He used to say he was going there for a rest, but he really went there to gamble—gamble on anything from horses to which dog would catch the first rabbit.

Mr. W. C. Gorman owned the race track at Peeler. It was equipped with stables and was the best track in the surrounding country.

On Sunday afternoons the young men often rented a buggy from Mr. Joe Barnes' livery stable. A buggy with one horse cost \$1.50, and a buggy with two horses cost \$2.00. The horses were usually spirited ones and made a dashing sight with the ribbons from the girls' hats blowing in the wind and their pretty parasols flashing in the sun. As one of the girls started to alight from the buggy, a crow flew just over the horse's head and scared the shy horse, which gave a jump and caused the girl to lose her footing. Her full skirt blew over her head and on the seat of her drawers was written "American Beauty." Some have disputed the fact that it was "American Beauty," saying Kimble's "Black Coon" flour was cheaper and more popular.

There was always a group to walk to Cut Hill or the river railroad bridge on Sunday afternoon also. If there were handcars available at the depot, then they sometimes stole one and rode instead of walking. This was always strictly against railroad regulations, and the officials as soon as they discovered the theft were close behind the youngsters on another car shaking fists and shouting accusations, but the threats never seemed to frighten the youths and the same thing happened again and again.

The automobile could have been a wonder of the

Old World, so impressed were people with it. Dr. J. F. Bell owned the first car in Oakwood and Mr. Frank Hardin owned the second; however, the latter was the older model. It had a wooden body and sat upon large rubber tires. There were no doors and the top was adjustable; but people believed the machine could run at a faster speed if the top were down. Licenses cost only twenty-five cents and an automobile was registered only once. It was necessary to control this dangerous machine with strict laws, for it often stampeded the horses and mules, which were still in the majority. Walking became passé and taking a Sunday afternoon ride became the vogue. Many men and women chose to wear the traditional linen duster to protect their clothes but always the women wore tied about their hats bright colored veils of net which blew streaming into the breeze as the car made the full speed limit of eight miles an hour.

One of the most elaborate occasions in Oakwood were the weddings, the first church wedding having been in 1892 uniting Dr. E. P. Murdock and Miss Annie Kate Waldrum. All weddings were performed in the Methodist Church as it was the only church of any size.

The bride some months before her marriage had engaged a fine seamstress of Bowling Green, Kentucky, to make her trousseau and the dresses for the bride's maids. The cost was only a small item, and



soon boxes of beautiful dresses arrived for the young fiancée. There were organdies with inserts of lace or silks with puffs in contrasting colors. There were hobble skirts, considered the acme of the fashion world, in which one could hardly walk.

The article below is an account of a typical wedding in Oakwood:

Miss Ola Hope Hearte and Mr. Milton Evans were united in marriage. The Methodist Church was the scene of the ceremony. The windows were effectively decorated with ivy and cedar, amid which were placed white roses. Green and white decorated the banisters around the front of the altar. Large ferns formed the background and over the steps of the rostrum on either side were white gates. Suspended from the arch above the banister was a large white wedding bell. Arches were placed at the end of both aisles, from which ran ropes of white and green to the bell. At 3:30 o'clock the bridal party entered to the strains of the melodious wedding march rendered by Miss Gertrude Carter. Down one aisle came first one of the ushers, Miss Pat Bookman, then followed Miss Lykie Selman, Miss Jennie McDaniel, Miss Bertha Hearte, a sister of the bride, and then the bride on the arm of Mrs. Rufus Evans, the groom's sister-in-law, who gave her away. Down the other aisle came the other usher, Miss Ethel Hearte, a sister of the bride, followed by the groomsmen, opposite the bridesmaids. These were Jim Harlow, John Harlow, Bob Dotson. The groom followed on the arm of his brother, Mr.



Rufus Evans. When the ushers reached the end of the aisles they crossed and went to the white gate, Miss Ethel Heart opening the gate for the bride and her attendants and Miss Pat Bookman for the groom and his attendants. The bridesmaids formed a semi-circle on one side of the rostrum, the groomsmen likewise on the other, each facing the one opposite with whom he marched while the bride and groom stepped forward, and standing under the bell took their sacred vows before the officiating clergymen, Rev. R. B. Key. The last vow spoken, they all marched out down one aisle, each maid on the arm of her partner. The bride wore white silk, the bridesmaids being dressed in the same material.

I might add that a boy or girl in Oakwood never married a stranger to the town but what he was a millionaire?

Sometime during the 1920's the radio was made available to people in small towns. At first they were only a cylinder coiled in copper wire with a button that moved up and down the coils picking up stations. Later there were receiving sets in large metal or wooden boxes with dials for picking up the various stations. It was necessary for the best reception to have a very long aerial extending between two poles atop the house. There were batteries to water and numerous other things to do for it, but the constant squeaks of static always kept coming. Neighbors came in all hours of the day to see and hear the monstrosity, but never did they miss the Tom's Toasted Peanut Hour,

for it was then that Travis (Bullet) Rose came on with his "Muddy Waters," and though they had heard him sing it over and over to the tune of his guitar, they always listened with great enthusiasm.

There used to be a great number of picnics and barbeques and each year the Old Confederates' Reunion was held. Nearly every man in the county had taken part in the war, and they, with their families, packed their belongings into a covered wagon and camped on the reunion ground the whole three days. The children were seldom seen except at meal time when they came to eat the meal already spread in picnic fashion with some old friends. After meals they always returned to the reunion made even gayer by the addition of a carnival with a merry-go-round, ferris wheel, ice cream and soda water stands, and other concessions. There was always speaking and a band beating out the "Star Spangled Banner," "Dixie," "America," and "The Red, White, and Blue." At night there was a play and before the three days had ended there was always a fight between some obnoxious drunk or bully and a fellow who wouldn't give in. The ball games nearly always ended up in a fight.

The home-town dramatics turned out no Hollywood actors, but they afforded great pleasure to the would-be theater goers. Anyone could direct and anyone could act, and the Opera House, the school, or the tabernacle afforded a stage. The emotions of the audience were stirred by the actions of the characters

upon the stage, and they all laughed or cried as the situation demanded. A program from a play, "Jededish Judkins," produced in the very early nineteen hundreds listed the following characters: Yale Edwards, Jim Harlow, Luther Terry, Will Holloway, W. E. Flynn, Will Jett, Maxcy Jones, Oscar Baggett, Effie Stroud, Lula Witherspoon, Fay Hearte, Annie Trotter, and Bertha Conerly. Recitations were given between acts by Mary Hammett and Pet Bookman. One of the favorite productions was "The Womanless Wedding" in which various characters of the funny papers were represented. With the coming of the motion picture, home-talent plays passed almost into oblivion.

Sometime before 1900 Molly Bailey and her family brought their circus to Oakwood for the first time. Molly had been a nurse for the Confederacy during the Civil War and some years later had organized her talented and accomplished family into a circus troupe which entertained millions each year and which later became a part of the famous "Ringland Bros., Barnum, and Bailey" circus. Molly was a heavy-set little person who stood about five feet high. Her black hair fell into natural curls which she did in a loose knot upon her head, and across her nose were little gold spectacles that made her black eyes even brighter. Her chubby little hands were adorned with diamonds and it was difficult to say which hand carried the greater number.

It was with eager expectation that the crowds saw

each year the long caravan of covered wagons roll into town carrying circus equipment, clowns, trapeze artists, dancing girls, and animals of every species. The anxious children watched them unload the heavy equipment and before the Calliope could sound its first notes to announce the opening parade, the children and parents had already gathered to be on hand when the drum major stepped from his tent to lead the band and floats up and down the streets packed with spectators. First came the major strutting and twirling his baton and just behind were the band in matching uniforms beating out the joyous airs. Beyond were dancing girls in full skirts and plumes, and clowns jesting and laughing in their red polka dots, and elephants all festooned in plumes, and camels nodding their heads to each awkward step, and cages of monkeys chattering to each other, and lions roaring in their vicious tones. Nothing could be more thrilling, and though the acts were always the same, it was always with great enthusiasm that the people welcomed Molly Bailey each year, from the days of the covered wagon to the days of the circus train.

As the sun began to sink eager crowds began to gather about the ticket window at the entrance of the large circus tent. The young girls were starched and ruffled and their gaily colored dresses made a pretty picture against the yellowish tent. The young men stood, their hands fumbling in their pockets while they chewed nervously on a long cigar, waiting for Molly



Bailey to open her doors. At last the hour arrived and the anxious crowds rushed to get seats most accessible to the one large ring. The seats were of the bleacher type with nothing between the board upon which one sat and the ground beneath. Already popcorn and peanuts were being peddled to the audience and the ground was becoming dotted with empty bags and peanut hulls. The music from the calliope floated in at the open door, and the smell of peanuts and dust and the cries of animals made one shut his eyes and take a deep breath. At last the bright lights were dimmed and only a spotlight was placed on the entrance from which would come the first performers. The band, now seated in the tent, struck an opening chord and from behind that drop stepped Birdie Bailey, Molly's daughter. She was all in ruffles of bright colors and her song was "She's Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage." Many a young man's heart sighed in admiration of her lovely voice and the beautiful Birdie herself. There were trapeze artists, and bareback riders, and clowns, and trained lions and elephants, and educated pines, and a little mule, but none of them could touch the incomparable Birdie.

Other tent shows came to Oakwood down through the years. There was "Willard, the Wizard" and "Harve Holland," but none compared with Molly Bailey though they drew good crowds and enthusiastic ones. The days of the traveling theater are gone forever.



A "Good morning" and "How are you?" was never just a greeting in Oakwood, for the latter was taken as a question and treated as such. The answer was never "Fine, thank you, and you?" but always. "Well, I'm not feeling very well this morning. I was up all last night with my kidneys, and I'll tell you I can hardly go this morning my back hurts so badly. I've taken a whole bottle of Lydia E. Pinkham, and I'll tell you I'm not one bit better. Well, I've taken two bottles of that medicine I bought at Hightower's medicine show, and I'll tell you it's done me more good than anything I've ever taken. Well, you know Cousin Sally has been down with her back all week too, and Aunt Maud's youngest boy has had the mumps in both jaws. They tell me every youngin' in school has the itch and their mamas are soaking them all in sulphur and grease. I'll declare, we're all bound to have malaria in the spring."

Every spring the entire family took a course of calomel to stir up the liver in the event the sassafras tea hadn't warded off the malaria. There wasn't any set dosage, but when the grown-ups looked down into the pot and said, "Yep, that's enough," then the calomel bottle was put away and a few doses of paregoric were administered to stop the action. After this the corkscrew was twisted into the stopper of a new bottle of Grove's chill tonic and this greenish liquid with the hard pebbles floating on top was given until the bottle was emptied and tossed into the trash. Usually the malaria came anyway!

It was no wonder that epidemics broke out among the urban pouplation for the privies emptied into the branches where moquitoes bred in great numbers, and many of the citizens had hog pens and cow pens that hatched out flies every seven days. When someone explained to a stranger where Oakwood was located, the stranger replied, "Oh, I know where that is. That's the town with all the hog pens."

Oakwood has been fortunate to have a number of good doctors and to have sent out to various parts of the state experts in their line of medicine. Probably the oldest doctor, not having an M.D. was Granny Martin who lived to be well in her nineties and who came to Texas from Jackson Parish, Louisiana, just after the Civil War. People far and near called on Granny to tend their sick ones or keep vigil until they passed the crises. Once Granny was sitting at the bedside of a sick friend who lived down at Nineveh and with her was a young man who was a relative of the family. Granny was already nodding in her chair when suddenly without warning the young man made a very unbecoming noise. He hastened to cover up the sound and placing his foot on the round of the chair made a scraping sound by pushing it quickly over the floor. Granny raised her head, a small black gum brush protruding from her snuff-filled lip, and looking sternly over her spectacle admonished, "That's enough, young man. That's just as near like it as you'll ever get it to sound."

In the medical annals of Oakwood are the names of such doctors as Dr. J. W. Murdock—who was the first physician in Oakwood—Dr. E. P. Murdock, Dr. John Driver, Sr., Dr. Murff, Dr. Davis, Dr. McCullen, Dr. Reeves, Dr. Bell, Dr. Whiteside, Dr. Sadler, Dr. Coleman Carter, Sr., Dr. Coleman Carter, Jr., Dr. R. E. Bing, Dr. J. I. Dunn, Dr. Cruniby, Dr. Rawles, Dr. Johnson, and Dr. J. W. Donaldson.

It is said that once when Dr. Murdock prescribed an enema to one of his patients, the good brother asked, "How much do I take?" to which the doctor replied, "About a gallon." The man went home, drank a gallon of water, and got well.

These men are our unsung heroes. These are the men who, day after day, night after night, have come when we have needed them, have seen us live and grow, and have served us uncomplaining. We are particularly indebted to Dr. R. E. Bing, our present physician, who has so ably and so faithfully served us during the past years. He forgot years ago what a full night's sleep was, and, regardless of ability to pay, he has gone to both white and black at any hour of the day or night.

Oakwood is proud to be the birthplace of such doctors as: Dr. Earl Carter, Dr. Coleman Carter, Dr. Sim Driver, Dr. John Driver, Jr., Dr. Harvey Bell, Dr. John Humphries, and Dr. T. M. McMillan. Few small towns can boast so many successful medical men.

It seems apropos here to discuss deaths and funerals,

which were regular occurrences. Though the influenza epidemic of 1918 took a toll of lives, as did the smallpox epidemic still earlier, most of the deaths were normal ones resulting from the regular causes.

The story is told of the smallpox epidemic of a family who, stricken with the dread disease, resented the presence of the yellow flag left hanging by the county sheriff in front of their home. They removed it in great indignation and though some of the people objected very strenuously, they were afraid to arrest them, though they threatened then in no uncertain terms, and as a matter of fact, they dared not arrest them for fear of taking the fatal disease. Coming to their rescue, Mr. Andy Miller said that he had survived the disease some years earlier and that he would put the flag up again. Being a fearless man and a man of his word, he took the flag and as he replaced the warning, he said in a positive tone, "I'm putting this flag up again, and I mean for it to stay here." The victims of the "Pox" offered no resistance and the flag waved in plain view until they were completely cured.

A funeral is always a sad occasion, but the old black hearse used for years in Oakwood made it even more doleful. Few people were embalmed in the early nineteenth hundreds, as there were few men who knew the art of embalming, and the gory custom seemed unnecessary. The first coffins were pine boxes made by hand but were later replaced by plush covered ones lined in satin and still later by the hard woods and



metallics. It was customary to make a shroud for the corpse which, in case of a lady was usually a loose fitting kimono-like garment of a pastel silk trimmed in laces and ribbons. The grave was boarded up and lined with white samite. The body was never kept out long since it was not embalmed, and on the day of the funeral it was placed in the black hearse, to which was hitched two coal-black horses, and was driven to the cemetery by a driver wearing a tall black hat. Nearly everyone wore black, their "funeral clothes," and a choir of friends sang several religious hymns, "Rock of Ages," "Have Thine Own Way, Lord," or "The Old Rugged Cross." Their voices floated out over the white-stoned hill and touched the heart of every tear-filled soul. Sometimes the services were long and sometimes they were short, but always above the sound of the doleful moans came the heavy thudding sound of the clods—the cold hard clods of dirt—as they fell upon the coffin already lowered into the ten-foot grave. This was the most heart-rending sound imaginable. The service over, old friends exchanged greetings and visited the graves of their loved ones long since been dead, and sometimes the family who had just put their cherished one away put wreaths to other loved ones, for the flowers were always plentiful. Few people ever studied the epitaphs on the monuments but what they were not attracted by one over Mr. Hagler's grave which reads thus:



Remember friends, as you pass by  
As you are now, so once was I  
As I am now you soon must be,  
Prepare for death and follow me.

An interesting project was begun in the 1930's as a result of an experience of Mr. Charlie Smith who come to live in Oakwood only a short time before. Mr. Smith had been seriously ill in a tubercular hospital in Arizona, and when they dismissed him saying there was nothing more they could do for him and that it would be only a short while before he died, he began to study the methods used in killing tubercular germs. Knowing that houses were often disinfected with carbolic acid, he applied a few drops of the acid to a cigarette and smoked it. Each day he increased the number of drops up to five and smoked the treated cigarettes regularly. Within a month he had gained considerable weight and returned to the hospital to be examined. They now said he was cured. Wanting to share his good fortune with others, he attempted to interest the Government in his project, but to no avail. Then he tried the doctors, and they too refused. Eventually, however, a Mr. Simpson of Baltimore, who owned a ranch near Oakwood, became interested and the two together devised a plan by which tubecular patients could be given the treatment and be hospitalized here while taking it. Unfortunately the older Mr. Simpson died, and the project was never completed.

CHAPTER IV  
PUBLIC BUILDINGS  
THE CHURCHES

Ring on, ring on, sweet Sabbath bell;  
The mellow tones I love to hear.

THE FIRST CHURCH in Oakwood was built the year the town was founded, 1872, by Willie Hasker and Joe Parker.

In 1884 the Methodists built a church which is now used by the Presbyterians. It was here that all large weddings were performed, for all the other churches were too small to give the right effect.

In 1924 a new and larger brick church was begun by the good Methodists and this time it was the Alvin Moore, Sr., Memorial Church. In 1928 it was well enough under construction that its congregation found it usable.

It is a large red brick affair with a seating capacity large enough in its main auditorium and balcony to seat all the Methodists in town and all the future Methodists that could ever be imagined, but it was never filled to capacity until one Sammy Cadenhead became its pastor. Being a young man of unusual strength and personality, the young orator soon had his congregation and that of other churches arriving at a very early hour in order to obtain a seat where

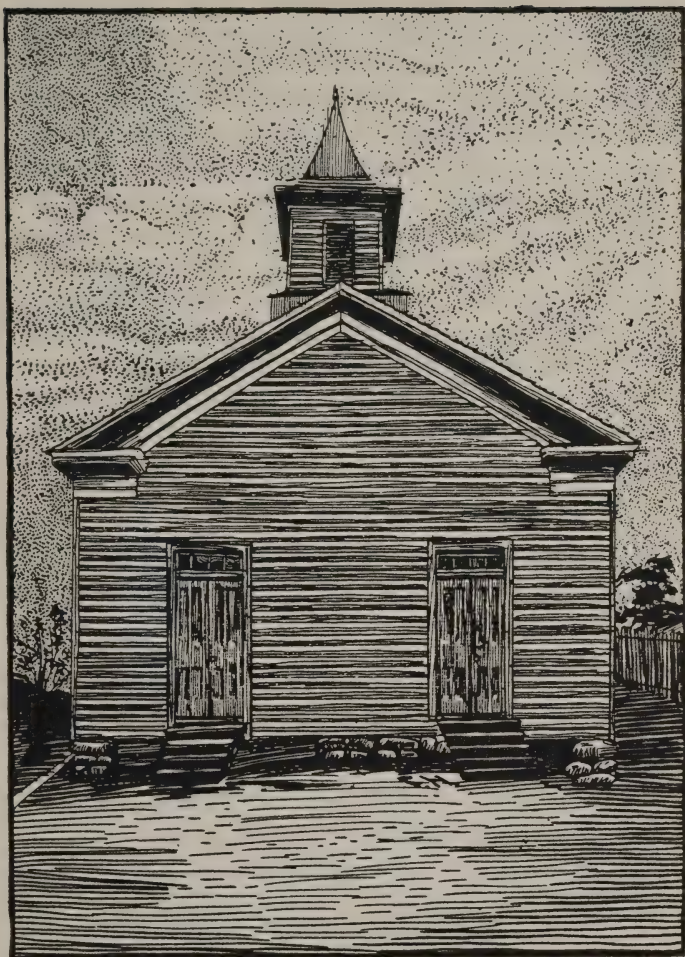
his sermon might be plainly audible. He not only had the people hanging out of the windows but made it possible for the good people to pay out this great edifice.

The idea of raising the money, from a financial standpoint, was an excellent one. It was that of a Church Fair which later became a typical gin feud. The article below is one written by Miss Lucy Belle Connally, a former Oakwood teacher, and was published in the *Oakwood Oracle*.

### *The Coronation*

By far the most outstanding event of the Church Fair proved to be the selection and the the "crowning" of the Queen. To merely say that politics reigned supreme is certainly putting it mildly but one was reminded of the "Good Old Days" when Jim Ferguson, Huey Long, and Aimee McPherson were the conversational subjects of the day.

The polls were closed at 8:00 o'clock, the excitement soared high; a verbal war was declared, the prospective Queens were shoved into the trenches back of the firing line; there was weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of false teeth; the babies were screaming because they realized the center of attention had been shifted; the audience was dying of curiosity; the younger element who were not participants were ambling here and there by Ankle-Express crushing each other's corns, registering disgust and indiffer-



First Methodist Church. Built in 1884. Now Presbyterian.



erence, salting their feelings with hamburger meat and cooling their wrath with Soda Pop. My poor feeble brain was trying so hard to figure out what was happening. I'm still trying to decide whether the Baptists were trying to buy the Methodist Church, or the Baptist Queen, or whether the Baptists were trying to buy a place for the Methodists to go on Sunday so they can have all the other local amusement places. Anyway it was a great idea. The only thing that was lacking was the Red Lemonade and a few balloons. Just as suddenly as it started it stopped and the Queen was announced. Verbal accusations ceased temporarily and the coronation took place. . . .

After the smoke had cleared away it was learned that the Cox-Holloway-Leathers nominee had come through victorious, and the church was completely out of the red.

The Christian Church of Oakwood was organized in 1896 and later was split into two branches. Thus began the history of the Church of Christ.

The Christian Church for its summer meetings built a large airy tabernacle, and it was here that for years we went to worship in summer or watch attentively the cast of a home-talent play move dramatically across the stage. But the greatest actor that ever performed upon that stage was not one of local talent, but an evangelist who went about the country in much the same fashion as her contempo-



rary, Aimee McPherson. She did not motor into the tabernacle astride a motorcycle and amidst a blaring of horns, but walked "god-like" down the aisle in her flowing white robes, ascended the pulpit, and raised her arms in prayer, and one could easily imagine her a beautiful white angel with spreading white wings, for she wore a huge flowing white cape fastened to each wrist. Her eyes were dark and her long black hair fell loosely to her shoulders. I had always imagined angels to be blond, but I could never imagine one more beautiful than she. All else was dismissed from our minds as we sat immovable on the crude benches listening to the beautiful flow of words that fell into the ether. If the world had suddenly come to an end we would all have entered the heavenly portals without ever being the wiser for what had happened, so spellbound we were. I think we should have all followed her unto the end of the earth had not our parents prevented our leaving home at such a tender age. We shed bitter tears when the day came for her to depart and it was with envy that we saw some of the older girls go with her. Jesus and his disciples could not have made a sight more picturesque. We would have fought and died for her—we, the young crusaders. But I shall never forget the bitter disappointment that awaited all of us, for it was only a few weeks later that we learned this poor, beautiful white angel had been arrested for stealing horses.

Sing a little song  
Say a little prayer  
And lay the old man away.

The Baptist Church, like the Christian Church, had two branches. The Baptist Memorial Church was erected in 1939. Though it had no Church Fair to its credit, it certainly had one remarkable pastor by the name of Chase.

Brother Chase must have preached at every Baptist Church in the county, for he was that well known. His chief text in the pulpit was "Foxes Always Have Holes in Shady Places." Sometimes he became so interested in his congregation that he would forget his wife and go out to get Fannie, his horse, to go home and leave Mrs. Chase behind. The boys used to play pranks on him all the time, and one time when he mounted Fannie and the saddle was on backward he sorrowfully said, "Oh, my goodness, someone has cut old Fannie's head off, and I've gone and stuck my finger in her goozle." He was particularly fond of old Fannie and when he was putting up with friends and was asked how much to feed her, he would reply, "Oh, about a bale of hay and a bushel of corn."

In addition to the six churches for the white people of Oakwood there are three churches for the negroes. Their faith, of course, is patterned for the white's, but the Holy Roller is unique in itself.

The Holy Roller Church lies just on the southern outskirts of the town and is placed in a deep sand



First Baptist Church.

bed filled with grass burrs and bull nettles. It is a one-room shack with a narrow front door and plank windows that can be opened or closed as the congregation sees fit. Sometimes they are opened to let in a cool summer breeze and singing mosquitoes, and sometimes they are closed to keep out the cold winds or the heads of curious white people who consider this a cheap sort of amusement. But to me, it always seemed a little sacrilegious for the whites to intrude, though I was often among the children who popped their heads in and out the windows.

One particular night a very special negro preacher from Fort Worth was to be there. I, along with other whites, arrived early and parked the car so that I might have an advantageous view. The preacher's fee was to be five dollars, and he refused to begin until every last cent was collected. June Glover—a tall, slim, southern negro—must have been a deacon himself, for he was taking up the collection with a great deal of pride. The humble negroes shelled out their hard-earned pennies to the tune of some jazz music vibrating from the old upright piano that sat in the corner, but the entire amount donated did not come to the five dollars.

"We jus lacks fifty cents," June shouted in his deep voice.

A few more pennies fell into the collection plate.

"We jus lacks six cents," he shouted again.

The collection was made at last, and the Ft. Worth



preacher—wearing a bright blue suit, white shirt, and red necktie—rose to the pulpit.

“I’s e been raised out of sin,” he sang and took two steps to the left and back, dip, two steps to the right and back, singing all the time in his rich negro tones “I’s e been raised out of sin, Amen.” His sermon was set to music, as an oratorio, but it was unlike any oratorio that I have ever heard. It all had the same rhythm, but it aroused his audience to great enthusiasm until they too had been raised from sin and soared on the wings of Religion, and shouted out occasionally a big “Amen.” The city preacher jittered back and forth for at least an hour, and, though he surely must have felt some fatigue, he certainly did not show it. Eventually the sermon ended, and when the audience could settle down to earth again, it dispersed. Their souls were bubbling over. Perhaps they had not got the text of the sermon—for I hadn’t, and I had strained my ears to catch a phrase other than “I’s e been raised out of sin”—but nevertheless, they were imbued with the Holy Ghost, and I imagine St. Peter will judge us all alike when we go knocking at the Pearly Gates. I think if the preacher had given them time they might have got around to the foot-washing part of the ceremony, as they so often did, but the “big time man,” anxious to be off with his five dollars, left in a big cloud of dust, and I heard Junie say, “He’s de bes’ preacher we’s e eber had. He sho’ am dat!”



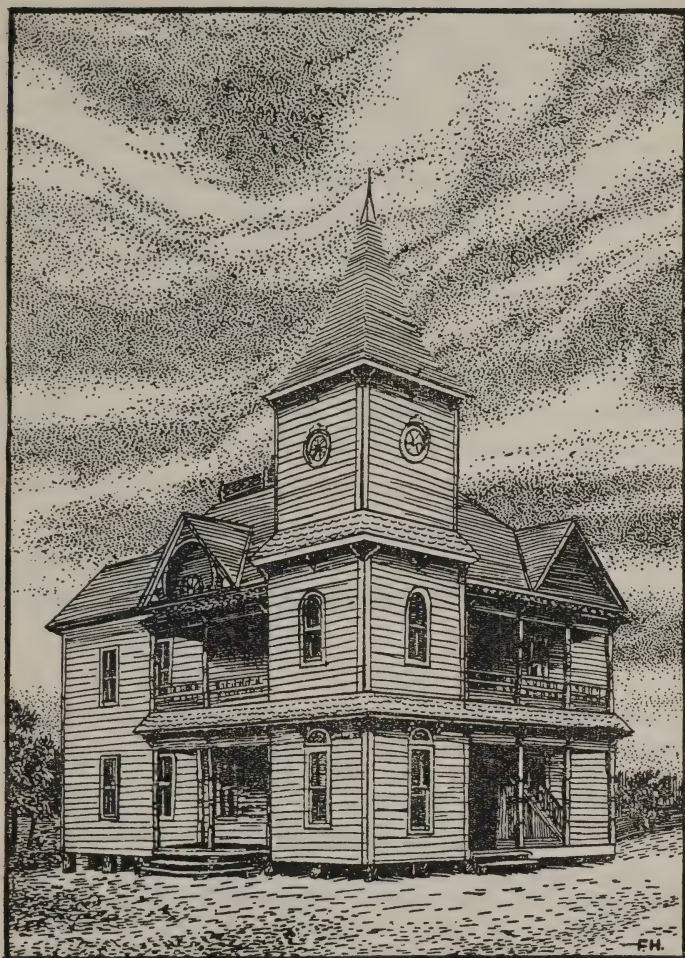
But the negroes are not the only race to accept this sort of religion, for once a sect of a neighboring town came in and before many nights it had some of the town's most devout Christians strumming the guitar and pumping the accordeon before an ever-increasing audience. At midnight the leaders found themselves quite weary, but a new convert refused to go home and blessed them over and over saying they had healed her eyes, and when the crowd disbanded hours later, she was still on her knees.

All of Oakwood's churches are filled with the best of Christians—and the best of hypocrites too—but one seldom thinks of the Baptist Church without thinking of Mrs. J. M. Stroud, Mr. D. W. Moore and the late Mrs. D. W. Moore, or of the Methodist Church without Mother Maddux and Mrs. Ophelia Colbert, or the Christian Church without Mrs. R. L. Knowles and Mrs. Jeff Rose, the Church of Christ without Mr. Monroe Redding, the Presbyterian without the Bings, and the little Baptist Church without Grandma Hester. They are the supporting foundations and the weather is never a legal excuse to them.

### THE OAKWOOD SCHOOLS

Reading and writing and 'rithmetic  
Taught to the tune of the hickory stick.

The first school in Oakwood was begun in 1877 when Mr. Walston instructed a class in the rear end of his blacksmith shop, but the first formal school was begun in 1884 after a school building was erected.



Early Oakwood High School.

Its first regular teacher was Mrs. Oder. This school was not graded, but the students went from one to seven years and were promoted as they learned and not by years. The subjects were about the same as those taught today, but spelling was stressed by spelling matches which were held twice each day.

This early school was replaced by a two-story frame building in 1896 which stood where the Christian Church does today. It had four rooms and could accommodate the enrollment at that time quite nicely. Professor Nix, who was of German blood and very intelligent, was the Latin instructor. A. T. Clark and Mrs. Clark later took the two teaching positions.

In 1910 a brick school was erected where the present school stands today.

Few of the old records remain intact today, but the following are excerpts recovered from the old record book:

#### CLASS OF 1911—10TH GRADE

Mabel Colbert, Mary Hester, Pearl Moore, Earl Carter, John Humphries.

Teachers: Supt. E. Reed, Gertrude Carter, Grace Crosson, Ethel Gorman, May Thompson.

#### CLASS OF 1912—10TH GRADE

Lucille Brantley, Lila Goodman, Lula Murdock, Irma McMillan, Ella Belle Post, Romye Tubb, Grace Wiley, Gertrude Wiley, Headlee Childress, Joe Hester, Earl Reeves.

Teachers: Supt. R. H. Bing, Gertrude Carter, Lena Parris, Mrs. J. W. Brantley, May Thompson.

#### CLASS OF 1913—10TH GRADE

Josie Proctor, Vaiden Moore, Cora Hadden, Neil Madeley, Roddy Wiley, Cecil Hardin.

## CLASS OF 1914—11TH GRADE

Cecil Hardin, Roddy Wylie, Cora Hadden.

## CLASS OF 1915—11TH GRADE

Mable Hunt, Edgar Russel, Lewellyn Rose, Willie Yelder-  
man, Winston Hester.

## CLASS OF 1916—11TH GRADE

Lawson Heatley, Guy Wiley, Llewellyn Rose, Ela Marshall,  
Roxie Lee Wiley, Norma Yelderman, Mayme Murdock.

Teacher: Elizabeth Leathers.

## CLASS OF 1917 (Records incomplete)

## CLASS OF 1918

Harvey Bell, Otto Johnson, Lawrence Tubb, Mary Holley,  
Mae Wherry.

Teachers: J. B. Posey, Eva Peevy, Elizabeth Leathers,  
Eunice Peevy, Florence Burtis, Milly Floyd, Mrs. W. C. Gor-  
man.

## CLASS OF 1919—10TH GRADE

Alda Ellis, Curtis Hunt, Inez Hardin, Macon Jones, Stacy  
Keller, Annie Laurie Murdock, Newt Rice, Arvie Jones, Allyne  
Shaw, Eunice Jones, Givie Beavers, Oscar Lee Gragg, Oscar  
Wiley.

Teachers: Florence Burtis, Elizabeth Leathers, Miss Smith,  
Miss Perry.

The following story of this class has been related  
to me and I am including it at this point:

Rube Hockaday ordered from a current magazine  
three stink bombs at three for twenty-five cents. Eva  
Peevy was the teacher at the time. Newt Rice was  
the appointed one to break these bombs which must  
have been as odoriferous as the atomic is powerful.  
Newt chose to march in after recess behind Inez  
Hardin and thought by choosing a position among a  
group of innocent looking little girls he was less likely



to be detected. As soon as he had passed through the door he dashed No. 1 against the wall and immediately the air became so vile smelling that those who did not turn pale and faint hung themselves out of the windows and lost the full contents of their stomachs. Lena Mae Holly was probably sickest of all, and poor thing, she was only a visitor. Miss Peevy tried in vain to determine the source of the bomb. When she asked Harvey Bell if he knew who did it, he replied "Yes," but refused to comment further.

When the second bomb was exploded several days later, Mr. Parker, a member of the school board, came before the class and admonished them good for it, but the class failed to heed his message until the third one was broken and it suddenly tired of suffering the nauseating effects.

When Newt Rice finished school, he left this verse behind him:

Men fight  
Less men  
Cats fight  
More cats.

#### CLASS OF 1920—10TH GRADE

Guy Shelton, Kittie Gordon, Myrtle Haley, Kathleen Lane, Jessie Paton, Ruby Hockaday, Ennis Humphries.

Teachers: H. W. Marlow (Voc. Ag.), Lucille Brantley, Mrs. W. S. Hale, Lena Madeley, Lois Crim, Mrs. W. C. Gorman.

#### CLASS OF 1921—9TH GRADE

Daisy Gorman, Edward Greer, Lynder Holley, Lillie Mae Hickey, Lena Mae Holley, Lurline Murdock, Alline Miller, Lillian Neely, Viola Redding, Vera Robinson, Mary Emma Steele, Ida Sinclair, Ruby Parker, Jack Wiley, Herbert Roach.



Teachers: Kate Hutchins, Mary Jane Reed, Tommie W. Palmer, Mary D. Hale, M. R. Martin, Supt.

CLASS OF 1922—10TH GRADE

Ruby Parker, Herbert Roach, Jack Wiley, Eurcal Ballow, Lena Mae Holley, Lynder Molley, Ida Sinclair.

Teachers: Kate Hutchings, Myrtle Palmer, Mary J. Reed.

CLASS OF 1923—10TH GRADE

Clara Belle Ellis, Ophelia Knowles, Lillian Neely, Mary Emma Steele, Reba Fae Trotter, Bennie Barkley, Paul Barton, Tom Colbert, Lovie Haley, O. C. Jones, Bert Lacy, Robert Lincoln, Travis Rose.

Teachers: Vera Vannoye Howell, Edna Fetters, Lucille Blank, J. F. Ferguson, Mrs. W. R. Ware.

CLASS OF 1934—10TH GRADE

Wade Barnett, Jack Gragg, Fred Hale, Horace Haley, Lankaster Johnson, Kinloche Lane, Harold Moore, Ethel Boggs, Flossie Edwards, Lela Hale, Lillie Belle Haley, Mae Holloway, Fannie Long, Ruby Mae Palmer, Thelma Steele, Ruth Wherry, Jane Wilson.

Teachers: Elizabeth Lege, Lucille Blank, Edna Fetters.

CLASS OF 1925 (Records incomplete)

Teachers: Viola Lanning, Mrs. R. H. Bing, Ernest M. Mills, Mary Emma Steele, Wilda McCaffrey, Mrs. C. G. Haley.

CLASS OF 1926

Pauline Barton, Alva Campbell, Lelia Mae Evans, Rufus Hardin.

The following was found scribbled on a page in the permanent record book with the above names:

“If you should happen to see these names remember them as pupils that have gone before you into the great world.

Rufus—excellent  
Alva—par excellence  
Lelia Mae—good girl  
Pauline—Punk”

Undoubtedly Rufus was the author of it!

CLASS OF 1927 (Records incomplete)

Teachers: Mrs. C. G. Haley, Mrs. R. H. Bing, Orpha Earood.

CLASS OF 1928 (Records incomplete)

Teachers: Mrs. G. A. Bailey, Evelyn Pearl Payne, Olga Heyen.

The average salary of teachers employed by the Oakwood School Board from 1910-1918 was \$100 to \$125 for superintendents and \$50 to \$60 for teachers. Between 1919-1921 the salaries were slightly higher with superintendents earning close to \$200 per month, vocational agricultural teachers about \$150 per month, and regular teachers \$70 to \$85. Today all salaries exceed \$100.

In 1931 the present school was built on the old site. It was a one-story building with all modern conveniences. The inside donikers were certainly an improvement over the outside privies which were neither comfortable nor sanitary, and one never knew when he might have a rush call in the dead of winter and find upon his arrival at destination that the whole contraption had been overturned by the "mean boys." There was always a conglomeration of names, and poems, and ugly words written all over the walls, and the Sears-Roebuck catalogues always lay in dirty heaps upon the floor. Sanitary fountains replaced the well bucket where entire grades of children drank from the outer rim, and sometimes one looked into the well to see a neighbor's cat floating on the surface

of the water. If the cat were not in the well, then the "mean boys" spit into it so as to always keep it polluted. The only thing we really hated to give up from the old building was the wonderful red fire escapes. We never had a fire, but the escapes were in constant use as slides, and we used to keep blisters and wear the seats of our dresses and drawers out eternally. The steam heat was definitely an improvement over the jacketed wood heaters, but bringing in wood was a wonderful pastime when done during class hours. The huge stacks of wood used to afford wonderful material for playhouses, and we worked months constructing them, only to have them torn down when the bleak winters called for more heat.

How long the days used to seem during the school term! I used to go to bed dreading to get up, and it seemed only an hour or so before I heard that voice calling me over and over and over. It never stopped and let me sleep, not a single time! There was usually time for a swing on the Giant-Stride before the bell rang, but I was always too late to get the one-handed one, the favorite. The bell sounded all too soon though and we all formed in lines to march in to our respective rooms. Roll called, we all began to think up ways to pass our notes and eat the bag of candy and read the love letters of some older girl now being passed among us. Classes always seemed so slow—except for the spelling matches which we had once or twice a week. Some of us were always standing

in the corner or at the blackboard with our noses placed in a circle and our fingers in smaller ones, and some few of us even got spankings. I remember I got my first one for telling the teacher she had fits and refusing to sit in her lap. And the afternoons were endless! No wonder we found ourselves playing hookey now and then. Was I angry the time two of us played hookey and sat up in a tree at the cemetery all hidden out until five o'clock. We could see over the hill and down to the school and kept watching when it was almost four to see the children going home when school was out, but we failed to see the entire enrollment turn out for the afternoon when it was only one o'clock.

"Four o'clock" was heavenly, but to many of us it only meant that we must rush home and practice piano an hour *by the clock*. I always left my door open so I could watch with one eye the baseball game going on in the street just outside, and I might have been a first-class pitcher and made the A team at school had it not been for those music lessons. Something happened though, and I didn't turn out to be another Babe Didrickson or a Paderewski.

The school assembly always afforded a great deal of pleasure to the student, for there was always the necessity of skipping at least one class. We used to sing songs, and I shall always remember the voluptuous noise we made when we did "Onward Christian Soldier," "The Spanish Cavalier," "Ruben-Ruben,"



"When Irish Eyes Are Smiling," "In the Gloaming," "America," "The Star Spangled Banner," "The Eyes of Texas" and many others. The home talent always performed and we listened to the disjointed strains of "Minuet in G" or "Narcissus" or to a lengthy oration which might have been "America For Me," "The Gettysburg Address," or "The Old Wash Place."

In the spring there was always the county meet which belonged not only to the school but to the town as well. It was always most fun when the meet was held in a neighboring town, for then we packed our clothes and went to stay for two days without the chaperonage of our parents. The first day the track meet took place, and we stood on the side lines eagerly watching our own contestants and cheering them on with loud bravos while hissing and booing the opponents. Those from Jewett used to get the loudest hisses for they were our bitterest rival and we always tried to accuse them of foul play. Next day the literary events came, and we sat in uncomfortable churches or school auditoriums for hours applauding equally loud our contestants for those events. The speeches had been practiced for months until there was not a single bobble. If one had closed his eyes he could have easily imagined himself listening to the monotone of a cheap phonograph, only at the county meets the record always broke. We used to take a great deal of interest in the boys' speeches, for we would sit in the audience near enough the stage to



be plainly seen and wink at all the opponents until they became so confused and so forgetful that they had to sit down, their speeches unfinished. It was no wonder that when the silver cups were awarded late that second night we claimed the greater portion. We were a great school!

The popularity previously known by baseball was replaced by that of football. All of us kids sported bright new pep squad uniforms of blue and gold and yelled in such loud tones that by nightfall we had no voice left. Anything for the boys though and anything to attract the attention of the handsome football captain who we hoped some day would put our name up for football sponsor. In reality the football team did not have a great deal to say in choosing the sponsor, for it, like the Church Queen, was a political fight. The night before the game we all gathered for a bonfire or snake dance. This was supposed to cinch the game for us! The next day teachers found it impossible to instruct a group of students whose minds had left the classroom and were already watching the football hero running sixty yards for a touchdown. Lessons being impossible we were dismissed earlier than usual. Instantly we went running for the field so happy that we could not refrain from jeering back at the out-of-town players and spectators who were by now arriving. We placed our squad on the fifty-yard line with our backs to the sun and proceeded in giving the numerous

rallying cheers we knew for the occasion. They were the usual pep-squad yells at first, but then when the game got a little hard-going for us, we used more forceful ones. Minnie Sue Claybough was always among the yell leaders, and she kept us making noise from the time we arrived on the field until the last visitor had left. The time from the line-up to the giving of the signals, 2-4-6-8-12-10-8, etc., seemed interminable but at last they were off and we were already hoping that Leonard Rice would get "mad," for when he was "mad" he could sling any football player there ever was right over his shoulder and set him down any place he chose. We did not always win but when we did not we never thought the loss could be due to the fact that the other team was more experienced or heavier, but it was always because we had been "cheated." Everyone "cheated" but us. The sponsor always entertained the squad afterward and we soon forgot our disappointment at losing the game that day and began making plans for a victory in the oncoming game.

In the spring of the year, just before exams, all the music teachers and expression teachers gave their recitals. All of us had new dresses for the occasion and all of them were chiffons with lots of ribbons and lace, all designed by Mrs. D. B. Fort. I don't know why they had to be chiffon, but they always were. We practiced for weeks struggling to learn our pieces, but there were always a few unfamiliar notes at the

last. I always felt a terrible illness coming on me at the last minute, and it was strange that the other students did too. We used to pray for the measles, but we were never able to have any disease that left an outward mark, and in the end we were coerced into making our public appearance. My throat always got so dry, and it was strange but the others had that trouble too. We coughed, and drank water, and ate cough drops, and wrung our hands, and then had to rest. The rest rooms were always in the most inconspicuous places, such as a woodpile behind the church, and when we finally managed to finish we found the teacher running to meet us shouting, "It's your time."

"Oh, Miss Mable, we've forgotten all the notes to the quartet." "Miss Mable, we can't do it." "Please, Miss Mable, we don't know it." "Oh! please, Miss Mable."

She pushed us all upon the stage, and we walked like Paderewski himself to the piano stool. I say Paderewski, because he was so unaffected, so natural, so meek, and we were certainly meek. Meek as lambs! The treble struck the first note and tripped on a second, but we were off. Being on the far end of the stool I could take an occasional glance at the audience. Always I could see our fathers slowly sliding lower into the seats, but the mothers always sat on edge beating the rhythm with their heads and sometimes their hands. I believe they knew the pieces better than we did. Gradually

our tense nerves became calm and we poured our heart and souls into a twelve-page composition.

We did not realize then what a privilege it was to be able to study piano under such an accomplished musician. Miss Mable (Colbert) had first begun her studies in piano in Oakwood. Then she went to Kidd Key. From there to Northern conservatories. She taught in China and toured the world. She was always thorough in her teaching, and whether we liked it or not, we learned. I used to love to hear her play "Moonlight Sonata." It used to worry me though when she left the room for a few minutes and then when I struck a wrong note, she came running to tell me it was A and not D<sup>b</sup>. You just could not put a wrong note past her.

The expression recitals were much the same. Usually there was more prompting from the teacher. I shall never forget being prompted every other word once and looking into the audience, and seeing Mr. Deck Moore stuffing his mouth with his handkerchief to keep from laughing.

Graduation came at last and some neighboring lawyer was usually engaged to give the Commencement Address, which usually turned out to be the reading of reams of papers and he faltered now and then at an unfamiliar word. The diplomas were awarded—no one ever seemed to fail—and each graduate marched up, neck held stiffly, to receive the sheepskin which was always paper. He took it in his right hand and with



his left he moved the tassel of his cap from the right side to the left side. The dignified seniors, unable to retain their bearing longer, collapsed and began to cry. Seniors always cried. They were starting out into the world, the mean and wicked world. It was true, for everyone had painted it so. Thus a school year closed.

Little has been said of the teachers thus far. In addition to receiving small pay it was also necessary until only a few years ago when applying for a job to hoe along a row and back another while giving one's qualifications to that certain board member. When he said, "Aire you Baptist?" and you replied that you were Methodist, then he immediately considered you incapable of ever instructing anyone's child in any school-room.

The school teacher has always been subject to criticism not only from her superintendent and her school board, but from the entire population of the town as well. Never has she been able to voice the concepts of her heart except in the case of one, and only one, Oakwood teacher. When Miss Lucy Belle Connally was fired from the Oakwood faculty she threw caution to the wind and published a farewell address to the people of Oakwood. The result was that she was proffered positions with better and higher paying schools.

The article below appeared in an extra edition of the *Broadcaster*, the Oakwood school paper, in May, 1937. The extra carried this caption: "Connally's Farewell Address to Oakwood."



*Fired Oakwood English-Spanish Teacher  
Talks Back*

Friends, Oakwooders, Countrymen, lend me your ears (with apologies to William Shakespeare), I come before men and women, God and everybody, wise and otherwise to make my Farewell Address to the people of Oakwood. However, I am positive that this address will not rank with George Washington's or even Old Patrick Henry's on Liberty. I, as you already know, am a Fired School Teacher. The minute that this happened to me, you rapidly changed your opinion of me, and an invisible wall of reserve automatically sprang up between us. I am no longer a human being to you, a person who sees, hears, feels, loves, hates, thinks, hopes, and fears. Instead I have become a dull, uninteresting person, a creature of low morals and no virtues whatsoever, a member of the Third Sex—a creature apart; in short—A Fired School Teacher.

When I look back, my life before I came to Oakwood seems perfectly normal. I came from middle-class parents just about like a majority of those in this town. I attended and graduated with honors from a school very similar to this one. I attended college under rather adverse circumstances, as I had to earn every penny that I expended. I entered my chosen profession at an early age absolutely thrilled to death. I was idealistic about my work—and I still am for I Love To Teach School. However, it was not until I reached Oakwood that I realized that I had chosen a profession that not only my work but also my entire

personal life, and even my personality was to be governed not only by the seven members of the board of trustees, but by every individual of the entire community—big, little, young, and old. Judging from conversations that I have heard since I have been here, and from my own experiences and other faculty members, the reasons for dismissal from the Oakwood Public Schools rank about as follows: 1. For failure to go to church. 2. For spending too many week-ends out of town. 3. For lax-discipline. 4. For too strict discipline. 5. For not associating with the natives. 6. For being too friendly with certain natives. 7. For spending too much money outside the community (the ones I have heard yell the loudest buy everything they wear, eat, and even drink elsewhere or else they live at home and go back and forth to their work). 8. For having religious beliefs and opinions and political beliefs and opinions different from the ruling authorities. 9. For belonging to the wrong church if you ever expect to go to heaven. 10. For not playing favorites to the Right Children (I am still saying they all look alike to me). 11. For holding a position coveted by some home-town girl or boy. 12. For holding a position coveted for some Old Flame or for some very, very, near and dear friend. This seems to be the Dirty Dozen. Anyone of these is sufficient to place you in the ranks of the thousands of unemployed. It makes no difference as to your scholarly attainments; degrees are secondary even though the State Law is otherwise. It makes no difference whether you are teaching your major

or minor or whether you are teaching something for which the law does not permit or for which you are untrained if you have no conscientious scruples as to how you fill out the state reports or if you are particular when the Inspector and County Superintendent comes. The work you do, or what the boys and girls think of you is secondary. Everyone of these statements are true.

It seems that I am regarded by the Natives as being Different. Perhaps I Am. But did you ever happen to think that maybe it is because I have been made so by the very citizens who criticize me for being different? Do you not realize that perhaps I am different because you yourself have allowed no freedom in the personal and professional life of your teachers?

I want you to know that I am leaving your town with a clear conscience. I have done everything in my power to build up the departments in which I was hired to teach. I have done everything in my power to build up your school library. I have done everything in my power to establish organized girls' athletics and equal rights for your girls in your school. And I challenge any individual to say and prove that I have not. I Have Not attended your church and Sunday school regularly, but I venture to say that had you seen fit to investigate and had come to my room at any time, any week-end that you would have found me at home grading themes, notebooks, reports, or preparing my work for the next week, or else I was at the school house working on the newspaper or the library records. I repeat that I am leaving your

school with a clear conscience and amply rewarded for the simple reason that many of my students have come to me and said, "I am sorry, Miss Connally. You are the best teacher that I have ever had. I have learned, because you have *made* me learn." Some of the boys have even made remarks of that nature on the street. Boys that I have camped on their coat-tails and used every method under the sun to arouse to the necessity of an education. I want to thank those youngsters publicly, and you know who you are. I would rather have some student say things like that about me than to have a recommendation a mile long written by anyone of the five gentlemen who voted on me recently and voted a 100%. Why? Because not one of those five ever attended a Parent-Teacher Meeting in the last three years that I have been here. Not one of those gentlemen has ever stopped me and said, "How are you getting along up there? Is there anything that I can do to help those boys and girls?" Not one of those gentlemen has made an effort to help us in our school activities, socials, and entertainments, athletics, county meets, etc. I challenge them to prove otherwise. Perhaps I am not worthy of teaching in your school because I failed to attend church regularly, if such is the case, I say Publically, that if your board members do not attend and support and back the activities of the school then they are not fit to be Board-Members. Oh, they say, we were attending to our business when you had those things. Yes! I was attending to the grading of my papers also when you were having



the things that you wanted me to attend. I have taken my medicine Mr. Board Member, and now you take yours, and isn't it peculiar that yours came out of the same spoon as mine?

My experiences as an attendant of the Oakwood Methodist Church are interesting ones. I have been here three years, and I have never been invited to join the young people's class of that Sunday School. I shall always remember the first time that I attended church in Oakwood. I slipped into the Methodist Church, alone. I know only about half a dozen people. Not one member came around and shook hands with me, although several members of the board belong. I took a back seat (because I was early) and happened to land in the place where the Old People's Class meets. I must admit that they were kind and let me remain through the class. I didn't especially because I happened to feel that most of them probably knew more Bible than I would ever know. For a number of Sundays I attended regularly and even began to get a kick out of responding to the teacher's questions. Then the members began to close up like clams and in my presence one Sunday they made remarks that they were not going to talk with an English teacher in their presence. They actually quit coming to the class because of me. Then I began to look at the Old Men's Class across the aisle, and I thought perhaps I might get over there, because they seemed to have a splendid time discussing things of both major and minor importance. About that time Brother Weatherby insisted that I take the Intermediate Class. Although



I do not think that it is even fair to the youngsters to listen to a teacher 40 hours of the week and then go the house of God and have to listen to the same Old Teacher, I accepted thinking perhaps it would save the class from destruction that I was in. I tried everything imaginable to get those youngsters interested (except throwing parties and entertainments, prizes, bribes, etc. I think they have a place in our activities but I think children should be taught to be respectful in the house of God without any promise of worldly reward). Anyway I was a grand and glorious Flop. They laughed, talked, giggled, pinched, made dates, etc., until I decided that the only method that could be used to bring them to their senses could not be applied in the church. I dropped out; however, my duties and my church obligations have been paid freely and cheerfully, and I challenge anyone to investigate and prove otherwise. No one was interested particularly, that is no one mentioned it to my face; that is, until Brother Cannon came. He invited me back. I explained exactly how I felt. During the Revival (and I understand we were closely watched and observed at that time) I attended four or five times and can truthfully say that I enjoyed every meeting. However, after I attended the first time, I was met on the street with the following words, "Yes, you are afraid you are going to get fired, that is the reason you are going to church." (Those people's names are on your church rolls too, but they are not Christians.) I want the public to know that I am leaving Oakwood stronger in the belief that you have Faith in

a Supreme being to enable you to live the life of a Christian in this town.

I do have some friends in this town and I want to thank each of you for your kindnesses of the past. I shall always have a tender spot in my heart for the Oakwood people who proved their friendship to me in the time of sorrow, at the death of my sister. I would like to shake hands with my friends before I leave—but I hardly know who you are so I am not doing any offering to do so.

Sincerely,

LUCY BELLE CONNALLY

P. S.—There are so many rumors in the air, so much shifting of responsibility, that it is hard to pin this thing down. Board members say it was at the Supt's. request, Supt, says "No." I say, "I'll swear I don't know." Anyway here is wishing you the very best luck in the world. There are thousands of splendid school teachers walking the streets just as qualified as I and I hope that you get one of them for my place, but I hope that she won't have quite as difficult a time as I have had. If I were a poetess I would certainly be inspired, but as it is I can't get any further than the title, "Who Tied the Can to the Old Dog's Tail."

L. B. C.

I feel that I could not write a book without paying tribute to one who has meant so much to a score of students emerging from the Oakwood High School—Miss Jim Oliver.

Miss Jim, nicknamed "Aunt Put," came to Oakwood

to teach as a young girl. She was well built, with alert eyes and crisp short hair. She was energetic and had the keenest desire to do her job well. Her students regarded her with the greatest respect and put forth more effort to please her than they ordinarily did for other teachers. Perhaps this was because she required it. I think we will all agree that what we learned from Miss Oliver we ourselves were hardly responsible for it, because if her first method of getting us to study did not work, she had another much more effective. She never indulged a student, regardless of his ability to learn or his father's position on the school board, and she took no orders from interfering parents, though it must have taken a great deal of courage to stand her ground when teachers were fired in Oakwood for the slightest irregularity. I think she was the most straightforward person I ever knew. And there was another thing about her. She had the most genial wit I've ever seen in a person. She coined her own phrases, used them year after year, and though we students adopted them and used them till they should have been trite, they never seemed that way at all. I remember when she would become exasperated with some indolent student, she would sigh loudly, slump back into her chair, and shake her head profusely muttering all the time, "I'm just shooting arrows at the wall. Why, you don't know as much about that as a pig does a side saddle. Actually, you couldn't catch a bread wagon with biscuit wheels," and she bent over

her book once again, paddle in hand this time, and started her lesson over once more, elaborating on each phase of it until the child actually had the information well in his mind. Yes, she had a way to make one learn!

It always makes me sad to think of Miss Jim. She gave her life to the Oakwood School. We, her students, who loved her so dearly and the parents of the children can never be grateful enough for what she did. She ended an era in school teaching that can never again be duplicated in Oakwood or any other place.

Few students ever attended Oakwood High School who do not boast of the fact that Mrs. R. H. Bing gave them a good foundation during their primary years. No other teacher can boast of having successfully taught so many students. It is evident, however, that our school had other competent teachers also, for the records made by students doing graduate work in colleges and universities elsewhere prove it to be true.

### THE POST OFFICE

The Oakwood Post Office was established about 1878. The first location was near the present site of Mrs. J. S. Moore's home. Later it was moved to the corner where Maddux Grocery now stands, and finally it was moved to the present site.

The first postmaster was Mr. John L. Perrin, known as Major Perrin, who was said to have been a huge man wearing a No. 13 shoe. His wife was equally



small and wore a child's No. 13 shoe. He later became involved in a post office scandal and fled the country to Mexico.

Mr. Arnett followed Major Perrin. Mr. Arnett was a natural inventor. Among the many things he worked out in his spare time was a revolving table. The table consisted really of two parts, a large table on which to eat and a smaller one, which revolved above the larger one, on which the food was served. It was operated by a lever under the table. Another invention was that of a paddle churn which was operated by the feet somewhat as a bicycle. Mr. Arnett also invented a water pulley to be used in bringing water from the well onto the back gallery. This was a slower method than running to the well and drawing it by hand, but the idea was an excellent one and could have operated nicely had there been electric power. In bad weather it prevented one from having to expose himself to the rain and snow.

Mr. Cutler was the next postmaster and was followed by Mrs. Bertha Heart, the first and only woman postmaster. Next came Mr. Claude Wiley, then Mr. J. R. Gragg, and next Mr. D. B. Scarborough who served from 1920 to 1936. Mr. Scarborough went out with the Republicans and was replaced by Mr. Elbert L. Tubb. At the death of Mr. Tubb, the present postmaster, Mr. Wade Barnett, came into office.

The Oakwood Post Office began as a fourth-class one and is now a second-class office.



## THE BANKS OF OAKWOOD

The first bank in Oakwood was established in 1900 by Mr. Oscar Wiley, who came here from Alabama and hauled rock for the railroad bridge across the Trinity in 1871, and a Mr. McKenzie. It was located in the Post Office building. Mr. McKenzie sold his interest to Mr. R. L. Wiley, who became president. Mr. Gustavas was cashier. In 1910 the bank was moved to its present location. In 1925 Mr. R. L. Wiley had a stroke of paralysis, and Mr. Oscar Wiley again became president. At his death in 1933, Mr. R. R. Wiley, a half-brother, was elected president and holds that position still.

In 1910 the Oakwood State Bank was robbed for the first time. The door was blown from the old-fashioned box safe and the robbers escaped with several thousand dollars. No doubt they took a handcar to Buffalo, for all along the railroad right-of-way were papers and checks. Mr. Joe Barnes, who owned the hotel adjacent to the bank, admitted he heard the explosion but did not want to disturb them.

On February 2, 1931, an attempt was made to rob the Oakwood State Bank again, but ended up in the capture of the bandits. Two men armed with one gun entered the bank during the noon hour and demanded of the cashier, L. L. Haley, to hand over the money. They failed to see Mr. Wiley sitting at his desk in the back office, and he quietly reached for his gun, shouted "duck" to the cashier, and fired at the robbers. At

this, the bandits ran and attempted to make their escape, but Mr. Bob Holloway and Mr. Lancaster Johnson were close behind them. At the intersection of highways at Dew, they found the police had blocked the road and were forced to surrender. Shortly afterward the bank was equipped with a tear gas system, and there has never been a third robbery.

In 1910 Mr. J. W. Barton opened an independent bank which operated until 1926.

### THE LIGHT PLANT

The first lighting system was established in 1912 by A. J. Howeth of Fairfield. It was an oil engine and supplied power until eleven each night at which time it was cut off, and there were no more lights until the next day. In 1920 G. S. Moore and G. C. Hardin became owners of the light plant and operated it until 1925 when they sold out to the Texas Power and Light Company.

### THE NEWSPAPER

It is believed that the first newspaper in Oakwood was published in 1899 under the name of *The Sun*, and was owned by two brothers by the name of Bookman. A short time later the paper changed hands and became known as *The Oracle*. *The Oracle* remained in publication until the beginning of World War II when its owner, Mr. D. B. Scarborough, closed down for the duration.

## CHAPTER V

### TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATION

THE CHIEF means of transportation in the early nineteen hundreds was the train, which has already been described as an antiquated wood burner with a large smokestack. Each engine was named, usually for some girl, and pulled a mail car and several passenger cars of the green-plush-seat style. The people usually took the morning train to Palestine and came back on No. 4 at night.

One of my father's favorite stories was one on Mr. Joe Barnes. It seems that Mr. Joe was on No. 4 coming into Oakwood when he felt the desire to take a drink from his bottle which he kept handy. Just as he raised it to his lips the conductor came through and told him no drinking was allowed, so Mr. Joe put his bottle back into his pocket and made his way toward the colored car. He stepped just inside the door, took out his bottle again, and just as he raised it to his lips to take a nip, a colored preacher sitting nearby rose and said, "White folks, you can't drink dat liquor in dis car. You'se got to have respect fo' us colored people."

Uncle Joe's expression never changed, but he lowered his bottle and without replacing the cork, looked over his glasses, making a sucking sound through his teeth

and said to a little negro who sat strumming a banjo, "Nigger, let me see your banjo." The negro handed it over without argument. Mr. Barnes with a little effort and still no change in his expression brought it down upon the preacher's head with such force that the fuzzy head went right through the banjo until it hung about his neck like a horse collar. He never let go his grip on the instrument but pulled it over the preacher's head, and as he returned it to the little negro standing with bulging eyes and a gaping mouth, he said, "Here, nigger, here's your banjo." At that he raised his bottle to his lips and took a big drink. When he closed the door behind him, the astounded negroes still sat looking on.

The horse, even after the introduction of the railroad into this country, was a popular means of transportation, especially when traveling short distances. The saddles were deeply seated, high at the back, and had a high horn in front. The sporty saddle had long goat-hair pockets, and each man's right-hand pocket contained a six-shooter. Some of the saddle horns were very large—seven to eight inches wide on which the woman usually placed a pillow for her child. The ladies' saddles were called "side saddles" and had only one stirrup, which was on the left side, and there were usually three horns. The left foot went in the stirrup, and the right between two saddle horns. Every woman wore a long riding skirt over her dress. When mounting and dismounting she did so with the aid of a block

placed on the ground just under her stirrup. A girl when going to a dance with a boy mounted her own horse, but in case her horse was not available, she rode the extra horse brought along by the boy.

After the horse came the buggy and gig. Most people owned their buggies, but in case the family could not afford one, they could always rent one at the livery stable. All week the family buggy was polished and greased to make ready for the Saturday trip into town. To make sure that the iron rims did not fall away from the wooden wheels which shrank when dry, it was often necessary to water the wheels each day. A trip of thirty miles was a good day's trip, and the hotels of that time did a flourishing business.

The automobile soon found its way into transportation, though it was some time before the people accustomed themselves to the noisy machine and before the teams upon sight of the strange contraption did not break and run. Fifteen miles per hour seemed a great speed to the motorist who rode his machine—and in reality that is what he did, for he dared not loosen his grip on the wheel and the passenger dared not let go his grip on the seat—over the deep sandy roads which he was forced to travel. It took a full day to come and go to Palestine, a distance of twenty-five miles, and one crossed the Trinity by ferry. An account written by John H. Canfield in the *Waco News-Tribune*, May 31, 1925, reads thus:

Bonnors ferry-boat, that creaks across the



Trinity to furnish Waco's only direct connection with East Texas, is about to pass on.

A year from now, a giant steel and concrete bridge will be carrying the stream of auto traffic that will rush along the new hard-surfaced highway that is being built to replace that which now twists about through sand and over rocks, a road that no one travels if he can dodge it, where, if one auto meets another, one of them likely has to straddle a tree or climb a bank, or dive into sand up to the hubcaps.

The ferry is now owned by "Bill Moore," whose residence, on the banks of the Trinity nearby, is perched picturesquely on top of gigantic oak pil-ing, to make it safe from the Trinity floods.

When the autoist comes to the steep banks of the river, he drives cautiously down a corduroy road and out upon the boat, to be propelled across by "one-negro" power, Mr. Moore's dusky hired hand collecting fifty cents for the job.

The ferry boat's power plant furnishes the information that the ferry has been in operation for over forty years that he knows of.

All along the banks of the river south of this old ferry could be seen deep holes just recently excavated and near a tree with a large B on it were numerous holes, some deep and some shallow. At night lights could be seen searching up and down the banks, for the story was told over and over that a large amount of gold had been buried in this vicinity, and the negroes living near the ferry and white people who had heard



Bonner's Ferry Across the Trinity.

the legend searched for years for the treasure, but always in vain.

The first telephone was installed in Oakwood in 1903 or 1904. It was operated from a small central switchboard and had extensions to the neighboring settlements. The telephones were in the main the wall type with a crank on the side as we still have today. People living in the country were on party lines and each family had a different ring. This meant that when the telephone rang every receiver was quickly clicked down and every family on the line knew what "who" said to "whom" at the end of the line.

While the telephone was still a novel thing Dick Hatley called his brother, Jap, one day. "Jap, is that you?"

No sound came over the wire but Jap was standing with the receiver to his ear and nodding his head exuberantly.

Mrs. Parker built the first hotel in Oakwood which in later years was taken over by the Witherspoons, as Mrs. Witherspoon was a Parker. This building still serves as a hotel today. The town was large enough to support two hotels, and there was another large green building known as the Marshall Hotel. Each hotel could accommodate between fifteen and twenty guests with two to the room, but there were only two outside privies, one for the men and one for the women. Rooms cost fifty cents a night and clean linens were put on the beds each day. Meals were served



Early Oakwood Hotel.



promptly at 6 A.M., 12 noon, and 7 P.M. There was always a variety of food—and good food. After supper the men would all gather in the office and play Dominoes and Forty-two until bedtime, which was between ten and eleven o'clock. The guests were usually men who traveled, and the register came to include such familiar names as Mr. Dilly Broyles, Mr. Luckett Kolstad, Mr. Charlie Duke, Mr. Jim Sweeney, Mr. Hyman Pearlstone, and Mr. Clarence Glenn.



## CHAPTER VI

### LIFE IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

OAKWOOD was destroyed by fire in 1891, 1908, and 1917. In 1916 a fire engine had been purchased. It was a small tank charged with soda and worked efficiently as long as there was water, but the small tank could not hold enough water to put out even an average-sized fire, and the "bucket brigade" always had to come to the rescue. It is surprising how many homes have been saved from destruction through the efficiency and daring of this volunteer crew. In 1923 Oakwood was rebuilt of brick.

Once Mr. Robert Mayes' home caught fire and while the brigade was working diligently to extinguish it, someone braved the flames to warn the "Colonel" that he must get out of the building at once, and the roof was by that time caving in. The old man sat by his radio jotting down notes on the cotton report as it came through the air. Looking over his glasses in some irritation, he said, "I always get this cotton report, and I intend to get it today." It was useless to argue, and when the report was finished, the old man tottered out into the sunshine carefully studying the damage done to his home.

For years there had been a legend concerning Collins Lake which lay near the Old San Antonio Road.

It was believed that a caravan carrying forty jacks of Mexican gold had been attacked by Indians, and that the Mexicans, being unable to save themselves and the gold too, had dumped the gold into Collins Lake and had never returned for it. Once Mr. Tubb discovered a wire stretching, under the water, from shore to shore. Knowing the old legend he hitched his team to the wire and pulled, hoping to find something at the end, but the wire broke, and he never returned again to look for the gold. Several years later when some of the Hunts were in Nacogdoches they chanced to meet an old Mexican who had in his possession a map of this lake. The old Mexican knew of the legend also, and he agreed to sell them the map, which was made upon rawhide and bore a number of signals and signs. They returned to Oakwood and with Mr. F. A. Hardin, who owned the lake, organized a stock company of thirty members. These members contributed twenty-five dollars each, making seven hundred and fifty in all, with which to engage a pump. Excitement ran high and everyone begged to have a share in the project, but the thirty members flatly refused, hoping to keep all the treasure for themselves. The pump came at last from Lampasas and the stockholders quickly packed a few possessions and made ready to keep vigil until the forty jacks had been raised from the bottom of the lake. For six weeks they watched the water get lower and lower, and for six weeks they sat upon the shore playing poker and waiting, waiting, waiting.

A café was set up where they might obtain meals, and nearby Mr. Robert Mayes had a saloon, so it was not a dull wait, but an anxious one. At last the water was all gone, but no jacks were in view. Only for a moment did this discourage them, and they quickly grabbed long sticks and poles and began to probe about in the sediment. For hours they searched aimlessly, and it was with bitter disappointment that they returned to town empty-handed. Who knows but what the forty jacks still lie undiscovered beneath a deposit of sediment accruing for a hundred years or more!

In 1911 the Woman's Christian Temperance Union was organized in Oakwood and all over the county its members rallied to do away with the liquor trade.

In Oakwood it was successful in ridding the little town of its saloons two years before the adoption of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution. Oakwood, in the main, was in a prohibition county, but unfortunately, one corner of it did not have local option, since it was in another county which was controlled by the negro vote. In this particular corner there were three saloons.

Young men and boys, who had never before been known to drink, were drinking freely. We knew that they were buying the whiskey illegally, but we could not get proof that would be accepted in court. Something had to be done. Could we, as mothers and sisters, sit still and see our sons and brothers becoming slaves to drink?

Finally, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union hired a detective to get the evidence we

needed. Through his efforts the District Court ruled that all three saloons must close. This was a day of rejoicing with our W.C.T.U. We were in debt eleven hundred dollars for the detective and lawyer's fees. We picked cotton, gave dinners, had plays, sold candy, and did everything that we could possibly do to raise the money. When the last penny was paid, our President, Mrs. Tubb, called a meeting of the Union that we might give praise to our Father for our many blessings.

Two days after this meeting, I, a W.C.T.U. member, saw a well dressed stranger talking to Mr. Hagler, a former saloon keeper. I watched them go to Mr. Hagler's old saloon building, walk around it and go in at the back door. My suspicions were aroused and I sent for Mrs. Tubb and told her of my fears. In a short while, we saw the men leave town in a car and go toward the county seat. Five hours later they returned. Mrs. Tubb called the members together, and after much debating, we went in a body to see the stranger, a Mr. Arrant. Our President asked him if he intended to open a saloon in our town. His reply was in the affirmative. She told him of our former trouble and begged and pleaded with him to reconsider, but he would not. When she had said all that could well be said, she asked that we kneel and pray. It seemed that such a prayer would have melted a heart of stone. The little lady, who had been first to suspect Mr. Arrant's intentions, had been very quiet, but as we were leaving, she asked, "Do you have your license, Mr. Arrant?"

He answered, "No." When we left him we tele-



phoned to the County Clerk and found that a license to open a saloon in Oakwood had been issued to him that morning. We learned that he would leave on the ten o'clock train that night and return next day with his whiskey. I suggested that we go to the train and give him a whipping before he left town. At first, this suggestion seemed to meet with opposition, but by nine o'clock twenty members, armed with buggy whips, had gathered at the Methodist Church. When we were approaching the station, he saw us and ran. Two trains met at that hour, and we were not sure which he would take; therefore, we divided our forces into four equal groups that we might watch both sides of each train. When the trains were coming, we saw a man walking toward us, and we knew that it was Mr. Arrant. I, calling to my group to follow, ran to meet him. I asked, "Are you ready to promise that you will not open a saloon here?" He answered, "No, I will not promise anything." My reply to that was, "I'm ready to give you a whipping." I cut him across the back with my buggy whip. He ran, but I had no trouble keeping up with him. My whip had been cut into two pieces, and I had the keen end. I hit him as fast and as hard as I possibly could. The other ladies had not followed me, but each of them gave him a lick as he stepped on the train. Forty or fifty of our townsmen were at the station and they seemed to realize for the first time how eager we were to keep whiskey out of our town.

Mr. Arrant came back two days later and opened the saloon. The men of our town promised us



that he wouldn't stay long. The negroes, who were usually the saloon keeper's best customers, were afraid to go near. One negro remarked to a man in town, "No, Boss, I don't go to that saloon; I done quit. I'm feared them W.C.T.U. women might whip me like they did that white man."

An election was called as early as possible. The negroes flocked to the polls, and boasted proudly, "We are for prohibition." Our side won by a greater majority than had ever been known in a county in Texas. Mr. Arrant was given one month in which to leave, but after three days he left under cover of darkness.

As Mrs. Tubb rode along home in the buggy, Mr. Tubb asked, "Metty, why didn't you hit him harder?"

"Oh, George," she replied, "I was afraid I'd hurt him."

All W.C.T.U. members distinguished themselves by wearing white bows pinned on their blouses.

Other organizations have functioned from time to time in Oakwood, such as missionary societies sponsored by the various churches, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Bridge Clubs, Forty-Two Clubs, and two Reading Clubs. It was through the efforts of the Thursday Reading Club that a permanent and lasting memorial was left to the veterans of World Wars I and II. The Tacky Party given by the Forty-Two Club always afforded great pleasure to its members. It was particularly amusing to see two of its members, Mrs.

Hub Gill and Mrs. D. B. Fort, creep along in Mr. Sam Hunt's buggy going to the party and then to alight in their costumes of the early 1900's.

In the 1920's the Ku Klux Klan was reorganized, and though each member owned a uniform and took part in the midnight parades, he soon saw the error of such an organization. The older Klan had functioned for a purpose after the Civil War, and there were a number of the original members in the new organization, but it was soon learned that a number of crimes were being committed in the name of the Klan, and the men soon discontinued their membership. The Oakwood Klan never "waited" on anyone officially here. Mr. Jim Jones, a member of the old Klan, was such a devout adherer to the concepts of the organization that he requested to be buried in his uniform, and so he was.

The Masonic Lodge functioned for a time in Oakwood, and though there is no longer a chapter here, some members still request the Masonic ritual at death. There are a number of Shriners here today who still have their long frock tail coats and Napoleon hats packed in moth balls and who keep handy the ornamental sword of burnished steel for purposes of defense.

On Sunday afternoon, October 11, 1919, a few people looked up into the sky just in time to see a black rolling cloud sweeping down upon the town. With no more warning this approaching cyclone swept through the town and did untold damage in property and per-

sonal injuries. Nearly forty homes were damaged and some completely destroyed, including the homes of Mr. Waldrum Murdock, Mr. Ben Lancaster, Mr. Travis McMillan, and the Negro Methodist Church. Oakwood was fortunate never to experience another cyclone though it has had several to strike in neighboring vicinities.

## CHAPTER VII

### INDUSTRY AND TRADE

OAKWOOD is primarily a cotton town, though the days when negroes driving cotton-filled wagons and roustabouts loading endless lines of flatcars with King Cotton are over. Cotton was wealth to many people, and the following is an account of a young man who got his start in just that manner:

Lester L. Colbert, new president of the Dodge Division of Chrysler Corporation, is a native of Oakwood, Leon County, Texas who says he "grew up in cotton" on the banks of the Trinity River.

One of the fabulous men of American automotive industry, Colbert is the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Colbert of Oakwood, 40 years old.

He joined his father's cotton firm in his teens, developed an eye for determining cotton grades, made enough to pay his way through the University of Texas after graduating from the Powell training school in Dallas. Then he went to Harvard and took a degree in law.

That was 1929. Colbert was 24, one-year married to the former Daisy Gorman, his childhood sweetheart in Oakwood. He ignored the suggestions of Harvard's venerable Dean Roscoe Pound to return to Texas, sat down and wrote to the ten best law firms in New York.

He went to work for Larkin, Rathbone & Perry

in New York, stayed until 1933 when he had an interview with Walter P. Chrysler, who took him to Detroit, installed him as a resident attorney for the corporation.

There Colbert decided to develop his boyhood interest in mechanics, took a night-school course in mechanical drawing and blueprint reading. His grasp of production matters led him in 1942 to the post of operations manager for Dodge's Chicago plant, which was turning out airplanes. A year later he became general manager.

Last month he was elected president of the Dodge Division.

The Colberts have three children, two boys and one girl. They live in Detroit.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Jack Walston built the first gin in Oakwood. It was a horse-drawn affair and was replaced a year later by a steam engine. More and more cotton was grown each year upon the rich black lands, and today Oakwood has three gins to its credit.

Today East Texas is fast becoming a cattle country. Fields are being turned into pastures, and heavy farm equipment is being exchanged for herds of white-faced cattle. The farm-ranch is a profitable idea, since each man can raise his own feed, a costly item in ranching, and can build his herd up gradually by bringing in better stock. The Brahma, since he has greater resistance than the Hereford, has been introduced into most herds.

Oil, discovered at Corsicana, Texas, has played a big

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<sup>1</sup>*Dallas Morning News*, 1946.



part in the history of East Texas. The day of the "boom" is over and production is controlled by the government in order to conserve natural resources. Largely through the efforts of Mr. O. L. Gragg, president of Carter-Gragg Oil Company, the Trinity River is now dotted by productive wells of oil. The Long Lake Field, one of the largest East Texas fields, borders along the Trinity River where almost one hundred years ago stood Old Trinity City, and the yellow flares from the gas wells illumine the oak covered acres. Hundreds of people are getting money regularly from leases where before they laboriously pulled it from the soil.

Carter-Gragg Oil Company is composed of three former Oakwood men: Dr. Coleman Carter, Jr., now of Ft. Worth; Mr. Kay Kimble of Ft. Worth; and Mr. O. L. Gragg of Palestine.

A rather unique business has been developed by three of the Hammett sisters—Mrs. Lora Colbert of Chicago, Mrs. Ganchion and Mrs. Lambert of Port Arthur. It is that of using sea shells in works of art. Today their pictures have received national recognition and are priceless treasures to those who possess them.

As for business in Oakwood itself, almost every farmer owns his own store from which to run his laborers. The shelves in normal times are stocked with staple commodities, work clothes, and items of hardware. The most interesting part of the store is the wood heater where in winter are gathered round

the same group that graced the sidewalk in summer from early morn till late at night. There never seems to be a closing or opening hour and when one merchant shuts his doors then the gang moves on to another. There's always a favorite joke teller among this gang, but usually the tales are the same ones told year after year. There is really little need to fear that posterity will be deprived of these priceless gems.

The farmers usually run their accounts on an annual basis. The secret to living a life of ease in Oakwood is to beat the monthly bills, and a large percentage of the people have ceased to consider a debt an honest obligation, and the Bankruptcy Law has become the laughing stock of the town. It is truly regrettable that many have come to judge matters so carelessly.

The informal atmosphere of the Oakwood business houses makes them particularly attractive to friendly people. I am sure that if the Federal Government in Washington had known the status quo of Oakwood business in Texas it would long ago have placed an amusement tax on every store here.

CHAPTER VIII  
GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS  
GOVERNMENT

On the 15th day of June, 1907, the city of Oakwood, Leon County, Texas, was by order of the County Judge declared to be duly incorporated as a town under the laws of the State of Texas, and A. T. Clark became the first mayor and John Perry the first justice of the peace.<sup>1</sup>

We know that there were earlier laws in Oakwood than 1911, but since the City Law Book goes back to this date, we shall begin here too.

On November 6, 1911, the minutes of the Town Council read something like this:

The Town Council of the town of Oakwood met this day in regular session, with the following officers present, to wit:

Mayor—J. A. Marshall

Aldermen—W. C. Gorman, J. A. Heart, H. W. Harlow, J. W. Brantley, H. T. Newkirk (Absent).

The following ordinances were offered by Alderman Gorman, to wit:

1. An ordinance defining the powers and duties of the Town Marshall of the Town of Oakwood, and fixing compensation as such.

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<sup>1</sup>Deed Records of Leon County, Vol. XXIII, p. 98.

2. An ordinance defining the powers and duties of the City Attorney, and providing the method of his compensation.
3. An ordinance defining the powers and duties of policemen in the town of Oakwood and fixing the compensation therefor.
4. An ordinance to provide for the levy and collection of Ad Valorem Taxes to defray the current expenses of the town of Oakwood, and for general purposes.
5. An ordinance to provide for the levy and collection of a Poll Tax on male inhabitants of the town of Oakwood.
6. An ordinance levying a tax on dogs, and defining the duties of the Marshall in relation thereto. (Tax of \$1).
7. An ordinance providing for the levy and collection of Occupation Taxes, and fixing a penalty for failure to pay some.
  - a. From every foot-peddler .....\$ 2.50
  - b. From every peddler using one horse or one yoke of oxen..... 3.75
  - c. Each peddler using 2 or more horses or yoke of oxen..... 5.00
  - d. Every person or firm keeping or operating a shooting gallery..... 15.00 per Mo.
  - e. Each canvasser for sewing machines, clocks, stoves, churners for washing machines ..... 7.50
  - f. Each acrobatic, and legerdemain or slight-of-hand performance, for profit ..... 5.00 ea. per.

- g. For each theater, dramatic representation ..... 2.50
  - h. For every claravoyant mesmerist. 2.50 per Day
  - i. For each concert ..... 2.50 ea. per.
  - j. For every managerie, waxwork, or exhibition of any kind, not connected with a circus ..... 5.00 per Day
  - k. For every circus ..... 25.00 ea. per.
  - l. For each person keeping or using for profit any hobby horse, flying jenny, knife rack (\$1.00), or any device of that character with or without name ..... 7.50 per Day
  - m. Each fortune teller ..... 5.00 per Day
  - n. For each person canvassing for the sale of lightning rods..... 75.00
  - o. For each traveling medical specialist or peddler of patent medicine.. 2.50 ea. per.
8. An ordinance requiring engineers in charge of locomotives to ring the bell attached thereto while passing through the corporate limits of the town of Oakwood.
  9. An ordinance prohibiting persons getting on or off, or clinging to, or hanging on any railway engine or car while the same is in motion.
  10. An ordinance prohibiting the riding on any sidewalk, or be concerned in riding any race or trial of speed, and the riding or driving beyond a moderate gate, in any highway, thoroughfare or public place within the town of Oakwood.
  11. An ordinance making it unlawful to allow dead animals to remain within the corporate limits of the town of Oakwood, and affixing a penalty for its violation.



12. An ordinance prohibiting the defacing, mutilating, or damaging of any public buildings belonging to the town of Oakwood, and fixing a penalty for its violation.
13. An ordinance prohibiting any conductor, engineer, or person in charge of any train or cars, to stop the same and allow them to remain on or across any street or road, highway or any public place, for a longer period than six months.
14. An ordinance requiring persons when called upon by the Mayor or Marshall to aid in making arrests, and fixing a penalty for its violation.
15. An ordinance requiring the abatement, correction, and removal of a nuisance, and fixing a penalty for its violation.
16. An ordinance prohibiting persons from in any manner attempting to hinder, delay or obstruct any officer in the performance of his duty, or from representing himself to be an officer, or from aiding persons in custody of an officer to escape, and fixing a penalty for its violation.
17. An ordinance prohibiting the throwing of stones, or other missile upon or against any person or house, and prohibiting the shooting of any air-gun, sling, rubber or negro shooter.
18. An ordinance prohibiting persons from loitering or going to sleep in any public street,

alley, highway, square, sidewalk or any other public place in the town of Oakwood.

19. An ordinance requiring parties residing within the corporate limits of the town of Oakwood to clean up his premises, and fixing a penalty for the violation thereof.
20. An ordinance requiring persons to make out and render a list of his taxable property and to qualify to the truth of his statement of taxable property.
21. An ordinance prohibiting the removal of the contents of privy in a manner calculated to be offensive to others.
22. An ordinance prohibiting any person or persons to allow any privy, vault or sink controlled by them to remain unclean or offensive or unhealthy and fixing a penalty for its violation.
23. An ordinance making it unlawful to discharge any gun or other firearms within the corporate limits of the town of Oakwood, without a permit from the Mayor; and fixing a penalty for the violation thereof.
24. An ordinance to prevent the throwing of balls, rocks, sticks or other missiles on any of the streets or sidewalks in the corporate limits of the town of Oakwood and fixing the penalty for the violation thereof.
25. An ordinance to prevent the dumping, keeping, or storing trash or other refuse matter in

any of the alleys, streets, lots or branches situated in the corporate limits of the town of Oakwood and fixing a penalty for the violation thereof.

26. An ordinance making it unlawful for any person or persons to leave any beast of burden harnessed to any wagon, buggy or other vehicle in the corporate limits of the town of Oakwood without the same being securely tied, or the tugs or traces dropped, or to hitch or fasten any beast of burden to any gallery post within the corporate limits of said town.
27. An ordinance fixing the fees and costs to be taxed in cases of conviction to the Mayor's Court.
28. An ordinance to prohibit the running at large of hogs, sheep or goats, within the corporate limits of the town of Oakwood and providing for the taking up and impounding thereof by the City Marshall and fixing the fees of the Marshall for taking up, impounding and taking care of said animals, for their redemption by the owner thereof, and for the sale thereof in case the owner fails to redeem the same by paying the impounding fees, etc.

Alderman Brantley offered the following ordinance, to wit:

1. An ordinance fixing the compensation of the treasurer.

Ordinance 28 was introduced again and again, year after year, but was always the most difficult ordinance

to enforce. In later years cattle not only found pasturage within the corporate limits of the town of Oakwood, but along the highway as well, and the possession of pasture land was never a prerequisite to the ownership of cattle.

In 1912 Mr. F. A. Hardin was elected mayor, Mr. B. J. Tubb was elected city marshal, and the aldermen were Messrs. R. L. Knowles, J. F. Bell, H. T. Newkirk, James H. Jones, and H. W. Harlow. The principal ordinances passed at this time were: (1) An ordinance granting to the Freestone County Telephone Company, its heirs and assigns, the rights and privileges to build, erect, construct and maintain, own and operate a system of telephones and telephone exchanges in the city of Oakwood, in Leon County, for a period of one hundred fifty years, (2) an ordinance making it unlawful for any person, within the corporate limits of the town of Oakwood, to get drunk or to be seen in a state of intoxication, (3) an ordinance to prevent any person or persons going into or near any public place or private house and there using loud or obscene language or swearing or cursing or displaying any deadly weapon, or exposing their persons, so as to disturb the inhabitants of such public or private house, and the punishment therefor. It was this year that the Woman's Christian Temperance Union presented a petition signed by the president, Mrs. George Tubb, and secretary requesting that a curfew law be passed.

The officers of 1913 were: Mayor, F. A. Hardin;

marshal, B. J. Tubb; aldermen, J. F. Bell, G. A. Parker, Bob Leathers, H. W. Harlow, McO. Johnson; secretary, J. R. Gragg. At this time an ordinance was passed to have Commerce Street between Moody and Love cleared of all implements, wire, or any other goods, wares, or merchandise that was stored there and to prevent any more being stored in said limits. (Fine not to exceed \$25.) A franchise was granted to the Oakwood and Trinity River Southern Railway over, along and across Love Street on the south side of the main line of the International and Great Northern Railway, and over, along and across Front Street to the intersection of the "Reservation" of said I. & G. N. Railway Company, for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a standard line of steam railway to run from Oakwood, Texas, in a general southerly direction for twenty-five years. (Switch.) Two ordinances were passed in regard to automobiles: (1) no automobile or motor vehicle shall be driven upon any public road, street or driveway within the corporate limits of the town of Oakwood at a greater rate of speed than eight miles per hour; (2) all persons driving or operating an automobile or motor vehicle shall, at the request, or signal by putting up the hand, or by other visible signal from a person riding or driving a horse, or horses, or other domestic animals, cause such vehicle or machine to come to a standstill as quickly as possible and to remain stationary long enough to allow such animal to pass, or to permit the driver to get control of such animal.



In 1914 the officers were: mayor, F. A. Hardin; secretary, E. J. Hale; aldermen, A. J. Howeth, A. Duncan, J. A. Childress, McOtis Johnson. At this time Dr. Coleman Carter, Sr., was appointed city health officer, and a city tax of twenty-five cents per person was levied.

In 1915 the city officials were: mayor, F. A. Hardin; marshal, B. J. Tubb; secretary, W. S. Hale; aldermen, D. James, McO. Johson, A. Duncan, and R. L. Wiley.

In 1916 the officers were: mayor, F. A. Hardin; aldermen, L. Knowles, W. S. Maddux, Edell Hardin, H. W. Thorpe, and Milton Shepard. At this time a two-hundred dollar fire engine was purchased from Pyrene Manufacturing Company, Dallas, Texas.

In 1917 C. G. Tubb became mayor; B. J. Tubb, marshal; W. S. Maddux, J. W. Barton, C. H. Blackshear, R. D. Wherry, F. E. Hardin, aldermen.

F. A. Hardin was again mayor in 1918, and the aldermen were: J. W. Barton, W. S. Maddux, C. H. Blackshear, F. E. Hardin, and L. Knowles.

In 1925 our mayor was J. B. Lincoln and the secretary, J. W. Barton.

J. B. Lincoln was again mayor in 1927 with T. L. Steel, J. W. Barton, Jack Walston, C. G. Haley, K. H. Childress, and L. B. Bing as aldermen.

In 1928 the aldermen were J. W. Brantley, J. W. Barton, P. R. Cox, L. B. Bing, and R. R. Wiley.

In 1931 the mayor was R. R. Wiley, and the alder-

men were C. G. Haley, L. B. Bing, R. C. Haley, P. R. Cox, S. B. Hester, and W. J. Moore.

In 1933 P. R. Cox became mayor, and J. T. Russell, marshal. The aldermen were Harvey Maddux, C. G. Haley, L. B. Bing, Robert Greer, and Bill Moore.

In 1937 J. A. Moore became mayor and the aldermen were L. L. Haley, W. J. Moore, R. L. Greer, Jr., W. H. Maddux, and George Stroud.

In 1938 the following ordinance was passed:

To purchase privately owned water supply and distribution system and sewage collecting and disposal system, and also provide and install such extensions and improvements to the said systems as are necessary to meet the requirements of the city and its citizens.

Due to the very inadequate records kept by the Town Council, it is impossible to obtain a list of officers chosen for the council or a list of the ordinances passed or rejected after 1938.

## POLITICS

Much can be said, but little can be written of the politics in Oakwood and Leon County.

We have heard the adage "Whiskey and gasoline do not mix." That is also true of politics and preaching. During an election year one well-known preacher used his pulpit as a rallying platform for prohibitionists, and it was not until the night of the elections that he learned the folly of his political activities. He was

accosted on a dark corner of the town by a drunk who proceeded to remove the pastor's spectacles and gave him a punch in the nose.

In 1911 the W.C.T.U. took an active part in city, county, and state elections. They made speeches, wrote editorials for the papers, and fought valiantly for prohibition. Such lectures as "Down with the Drinking Evil," "There's No Booze in Christianity," and "Rum and Rebellion" were popular themes. Among the prominent members of the Oakwood chapter were: Miss Gertrude Carter, Mrs. Jim Brantley, Mrs. E. J. Hale, Mrs. P. R. Cox, Mrs. Mettie Tubb, and Mrs. R. H. Bing.

Prohibition might have taken whiskey out of sight, but it created a new industry which increased in popularity year after year. The "bootlegger," both colored and white, bought a barrel of sugar, erected a crude hut on any branch, and concocted a mixture that would have corroded iron. It sold upwards from twenty-five cents a gallon to forty cents per two gallons. One could slip out of town under cover and purchase it at the still at a wholesale price or have it delivered in town at a price slightly higher. If delivered in town, it was usually deposited in some obscure place as a seed house, or feed store, or the wagon yard, or even under the Presbyterian Church, and here the buyer came to claim it. Sometimes he went to the branch and almost out of nowhere pulled a string and untied the jar at the end of it. The art of peddling the

liquefied corn was much more tedious than the brewing.

Home-brew, though not as popular as the corn, was a popular beverage and easily made. Even some of the better families converted their bathtubs into kettles and used their catsup bottles for containers. It is well that people knew very little about sanitary conditions and germs, for the liquor traffic certainly would have suffered a setback in the early days of its history.

It was situations like these with which the sheriff, honest or crooked, had to deal. If he were honest, he lay belly-fashion in the mosquito-infested woods until he caught the bootlegger. But, as the honest sheriff usually served only one term, the bootlegger had only a short time to wait before setting himself up in business again. The crooked sheriff encouraged the whiskey business by failing to make arrests, except in cases when the bootlegger refused to divide the spoils.

The sheriff's race for many years was the most contested of all political offices. Electioneering was done on a wholesale scale, as was that for the commissioner's race.

It is regrettable that politics in this county did not do for Leon what politics did for Louisiana under Huey P. Long in the way of public works.

## CHAPTER IX

### WORLD WARS I AND II

In 1917 when the call came for men, the response was immediate. The boys almost to a man, responded willingly and without any murmurs as to the hardships they would be expected to undergo, the sacrifices they would have to make, the good homes they would have to give up in exchange for the privations and the hardships of the training camps. And then when the call came for men to go overseas, our Leon County boys were among the first to go, and among the first to reach the front. All of them acquitted themselves with honor—all fought like the true Americans they were although some of them never returned to their home, but now lie sleeping “In Flanders’ Fields” . . . martyrs to the cause of Liberty and Humanity. The glorious records of our boys will go down to posterity as one of the most brilliant pages of American History.

THUS READ the introduction to the book, *Leon County Boys in the World War*, by H. V. and R. F. Robinson of Jewett, Texas. This remains true of the boys of World War II who also fought and died for the cause of Liberty and Humanity.

As a fitting tribute to our boys the Thursday Reading Club of Oakwood, Texas, has erected from donations a permanent and lasting memorial in the form



of a brick-columned entrance to the cemetery and improvements and beautifications on the road leading to the cemetery itself.

Below is a list of soldiers from World War I who enlisted from Oakwood, with their rating and service. It is regrettable that soldiers from the entire county cannot be included here. The information below was also compiled by H. V. and R. F. Robinson.

### *The Army*

#### OFFICERS SECTION:

1. First Lieutenant Coleman J. Carter, Jr., son of Dr. and Mrs. Coleman Carter, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted in the U. S. Army August 21st, 1917. Was sent to Ft. Oglethorpe, Georgia, and remained there until March 27, 1918, and was then sent to New Orleans to take a special course on war Fractures. From there he went to Base Hospital at Alexandria, La., then to Base Hospital, Ft. Sam Houston, Texas. Attached to Base Hospital No. 17, Presidio, San Francisco, Cal. Sent with Base Hospital 17 to Vladivostok, Siberia, landed there October 1, 1918. Served there in Base Hospital about three months, then transferred to Suchan Mines, Siberia, as Camp Physician of Post till April 1, 1919. He was in the Medical Corps of the A.E.F. to Siberia. Left Vladivostok April 1, 1919, arrived San Francisco, Cal., May 7, discharged May 8, 1919, at Presidio, San Francisco.
2. First Lieutenant Jim Bell Hester, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Hester, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted in the U. S. Army in Sept., 1918. Was stationed with the Med. Department at Camp Bowie, Ft. Worth, Texas, until the date of his discharge.
3. 2nd Lieutenant John Thomas Humphries, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Humphries, Oakwood, Texas, entered the U. S. Army Sept. 5th, 1917. He was sent first to Camp

Travis, then to Camp Jackson, N.C., then to Louisville, Ky., then to Ft. Sill, Okla., to the Officers Training School. Had just finished training and received commission when the armistice was signed. Discharged Dec. 1, 1918.

#### ENLISTED MEN:

1. Everett L. Radford, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. O. Radford, Oakwood, Texas, entered the U. S. Army May 27, 1918. Landed in France Aug., 1918. Saw active service on the Champagne sector. Was wounded in eyes by shrapnel and rendered totally blind. Discharged in April, 1919.
2. Harvey L. Dickey, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Dickey, Oakwood, Texas, entered the U. S. Army May 27, 1918. Sailed for France in August. Saw active service in Champagne sector and Argonne Woods.
3. Allie S. Radford, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Radford, Oakwood, Texas, entered the U. S. Army May 27, 1918. Landed in France in August, 1918. Saw active service in Champagne sector, and was slightly shell shocked in October. Discharged March 19, 1919.
4. Robert Redding, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Redding, Oakwood, Texas, entered the U. S. Army May 27, 1918. Landed in France Aug. 12, 1919. Stationed at Coetquidan at main Artillery Camp. Discharged April 10, 1919.
5. Wesley D. Dorman, son of W. A. and Mrs. M. D. Dorman, Nineveh, Texas, entered the U. S. Army Sept. 18, 1917. Landed in France May 16, 1918. Saw active service in the Argonne Forest and several sectors, was slightly gassed once. Sent in March, 1919, to Berlin with Inter-Allied Mission.
6. Corporal Walter H. Cash, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Cash, Oakwood, Texas, entered the Army May 26, 1918. Landed in France in Sept., 1918. Discharged May 2, 1919.

7. William T. Hester, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Hester, Oakwood, Texas, entered the Army June 26, 1918. Saw service in Argonne Forest, before Metz and in the St. Mihiel drive. Was slightly gassed Oct. 2 in Argonne Forest. Discharged May 24, 1919.
8. James R. Fields, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Fields, Oakwood, Texas, entered the Army May 27, 1918. Landed at Brest, France, Sept. 3, 1918. Was on front lines for two days before signing of Armistice.
9. William Byron Haley, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Haley, Oakwood, Texas, entered the Army in Aug., 1917. Landed in France in May, 1918. Saw active service in St. Mihiel and Argonne Forest, also on Guard Duty in Alsace-Lorraine. Discharged May 7, 1919.
10. Emmett P. McCall, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. P. McCall, Oakwood, Texas, entered the Army Aug. 8, 1918. Sailed for France Oct. 12, 1918. Discharged July, 1919.
11. Cpl. Edgar A. P. Hester, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Hester, Oakwood, Texas, entered Army Sept. 12, 1917. Saw service overseas. Discharged in June, 1919.
12. Henry S. Hockaday, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Hockaday, Oakwood, Texas, entered the Army July 25, 1918. Landed in France in Nov., 1918. Stationed at Bordeaux. Discharged March 11, 1919.
13. John Alvin Moore, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Moore, Oakwood, Texas, entered the Army Jan. 31, 1918. Landed in France July 31, 1918. Stationed at Aviation Instruction Center, Issoudun, France, and at St. Nazaire. Discharged July 10, 1919.
14. Joe M. Hester, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Hester, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted in the Army Aug. 27, 1917. Landed in Brest, France, Aug. 14, 1918. Discharged April 4, 1919.
15. Archie Tubb, son of Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Tubb, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted in the Army May 19, 1917.

Landed in France Nov. 11, 1917. Saw service in Meuse-Argonne. Discharged June 6, 1919.

16. Sgt. LaRue Jones, son of Mrs. Sallie Jones, Oakwood, Texas, entered the Army April 27, 1918. Served overseas.
17. John T. Gill, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Gill, Oakwood, Texas, entered the Army Sept. 5, 1918. Discharged Dec. 7, 1918.
18. Sterling T. Childs, Oakwood, Texas, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. R. Childs, entered Army Sept. 6, 1918. Discharged July 6, 1919.
19. Charles M. Haley, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Haley, Oakwood, Texas, entered the Army Nov. 27, 1917. Discharged March ?, 1919.
20. Earl Haley, son of Mr. and Mrs. T. C. Haley, Oakwood, Texas, entered Army Sept. 6, 1918. Discharged Dec. 12, 1918.
21. I. D. Hickman, son of Mr. and Mrs. I. J. Hickman, Oakwood, Texas, entered Army Sept. 6, 1918. Discharged Nov. 27, 1918.
22. James M. McCann, Oakwood, Texas, entered Army Sept. 6, 1918, discharged Dec. 31, 1918.
23. Bert Sinclair, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Sinclair, Oakwood, Texas, entered Army May 26, 1919. Discharged July 21, 1919.
24. L. E. Vannatta, Oakwood, Texas, son of Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Vannatta, entered the Army Sept. 18, 1918. Discharged Dec. 8, 1918.
25. Sherman Tryon, son of Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Tryon, Oakwood, Texas, entered Army Sept. 6, 1918, discharged Nov. 28, 1918.
26. Willie E. Tryon, son of Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Tryon, Oakwood, Texas, entered Army March 29, 1918. Discharged May 2, 1919.

27. Dugan Woodward, son of Mr. and Mrs. M. F. Woodward, Oakwood, Texas, entered Army June 26, 1918, discharged Feb. 18, 1919.
28. Edgar H. Harlow, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Harlow, Oakwood, Texas, entered the Army April 13, 1918. Landed in France Nov. 22, 1918, discharged July 27, 1919.
29. Albert S. Keils, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Keils, Oakwood, Texas, entered the Army May 27, 1918. Saw active service at front in France, discharged June, 1919.
30. Robert D. Calhoun, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. K. Calhoun, Oakwood, Texas. Saw active service overseas, transferred to Pershing's picked division, the 1st.
31. William A. Keils, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Keils, Oakwood, Texas, entered Army Aug. 25, 1918, discharged Dec. 26, 1918.
32. Jack Walston, son of Mrs. A. Lincoln, Oakwood, Texas, entered Army Sept. 5, 1918, discharged Dec. 7, 1918.
33. Wood Hagler, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. Hagler, Oakwood, Texas, entered Army May 6, 1918, discharged Dec. 23, 1918.
34. Cpl. Alva C. Scott, Oakwood, Texas, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Scott, entered Army May 6, 1918, discharged Feb. 19, 1919.
35. Robert Brashear, Oakwood, Texas, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Brashear, entered Army Oct. 6, 1918, discharged Dec. 8, 1918.
36. Luther R. Gaddis, enlisted July 25, 1918.
37. Bob Hagler.
38. Lawrence R. Lipsey, enlisted Aug. 6, 1917.
39. Monk Rutherford, enlisted June 26, 1918.
40. Dewey Reeves, enlisted Sept. 6, 1918.



41. Clarence H. Thorpe, enlisted May 27, 1918.
42. Scotty Reynolds, Pfc., enlisted 1917, discharged 1919.

### *The Navy*

1. George Cecil Hardin, son of Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Hardin, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted in Navy May 14, 1917, landed Pauillac, France, and transferred to Ammunition Train to front, discharged March 28, 1919.
2. Marvin L. Russell, son of Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Russell, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted July 3, 1917. Attached to Naval Overseas Transportation Service, discharged Aug. 27, 1919.
3. Robert B. Sheppard, son of Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Sheppard, Oakwood, Texas, made 12 trips across on a transport. His ship, U. S. S. Susquehanna, was attacked 4 times by submarines.
4. Ray Roquemore, enlisted June 1, 1917, discharged Feb. 21, 1919.
5. R. Lee Holley, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Holley, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted in U. S. Merchant Marines Sept. 2, 1918, discharged Feb. 13, 1919.
6. Will F. Hickman, son of Mr. and Mrs. I. J. Hickman, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted in Navy Nov. 30, 1917.

### *United States Marine Corps*

1. Wade W. Wiley, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Wiley, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted June 1, 1917, convoy duty.
2. Guy W. Wiley, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Wiley, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted June 10, 1918, patrol duty on Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, discharged June 27, 1919.
3. Sgt. Reagan Tubb, son of Mr. and Mrs. B. J. Tubb, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted July, 1917, sent to France, was wounded by a machine gun bullet in the battle of Chateau-Thierry, and was awarded the D.S.C. for bravery in action.

4. Karl Johnson, son of Mr. and Mrs. McO. Johnson, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted June 2, 1918, stationed at Bordeaux and Brest, France, discharged Aug. 13, 1919.
5. Kay H. Childress, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jno. A. Childress, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted June 9, 1918, discharged Feb. 8, 1919.
6. Hobson Childress, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jno. A. Childress, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted June 9, 1918, discharged Feb. 8, 1919.
7. Charlie E. Oller, son of Mrs. M. E. Walston, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted June 24, 1918, stationed at Bordeaux, France.
8. Cpl. Roy Franklin Perry, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. B. Perry, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted June 27, 1918. Stationed at St. Nazaire and Nantes, France. Qualified as sharpshooter, discharged Aug. 13, 1919.

*In Memoriam*

1. Sergeant William L. Humphries, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Humphries, Oakwood, Texas, enlisted in the National Guard April 2, 1917. First served on Mexican border, sailed for France in July, 1918. He was killed October 17, 1918, on Meadah Farm by a German shell, known as the 88, near St. Etienne, France, the first day at the front. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre with Silver Star, and cited for gallantry in action.
2. Edwin Mobley Gorman, youngest son of W. C. and Lura Mobley Gorman, was born at Palestine, Texas, on March 6, 1897. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in July, 1917, and after a short period of training at Paris Island and Quantico, Va., was among the first troops that sailed for France. He fought for 17 days in the battles of Chateau-Thierry and Belleau Woods, and continued in the battles of the Marne until he fell in action on July 21, 1918.

*Red Cross*

Mrs. Addie Wiley, Chairman  
Mrs. A. J. Howeth, Treasurer  
Mrs. H. Dorman, Secretary

## WORLD WAR II

*The Army*

## OFFICERS SECTION:

1. Bing, Roland Edward, 1st Lt.
2. Key, Alexander Franklin, 2nd Lt.
3. McMillan, Thomas Moore, Capt., Medical Corps, discharged Feb. 7, 1946.
4. Cox, Woodrow B., 1st Lt., Army Air Corps, entered July 1942, discharged Oct. 26, 1945.
5. Brooks, Charles Amous, Capt., Inf. Entered Jan., 1936, wounded in France. Decoration—Purple Heart.
6. Moore, Thomas Guy, 1st Lt., 655th Topographical Eng. Bt., entered Oct. 29, 1942. Campaigns—Rhine and Central Germany, Army of Occupation. Decorations—2 Battle Stars. Only Volunteer Officer Candidate from Leon County.
7. Reynolds, Scotty, Jr., 1st Lt., entered July, 1941. Stationed at Marseilles, France.
8. Price, Manning, Major, Sanitary Corps, Medical Dept. Battles and campaigns—Naples-Foggia and Rome-Arno.

## ENLISTED MEN:

1. Alexander, John Wesley, T/Sgt., 24th Division, entered Army Dec. 22, 1943, discharged Jan. 21, 1946. Battles and campaigns—New Guinea, Leiti, Mindanao, Tabo, Luzon, Samar, Corregidor, Okinawa, Japan. Medals and citations—five Bronze Stars, two Purple Hearts, Good Conduct medal, Arrow Head Medal. Wounded on Corregidor.

2. Anders, William N., Sgt., 3rd Bombardment Group, 90th Bombardment Sqd., entered Army June 3, 1943, discharged Dec. 25, 1945. Campaigns—New Guinea, So. Philippines, Luzon, Western Pacific Rajukyus. Decorations—Asiatic Philippines Campaign Medal with 6 Bronze Stars, Philippino Liberation Ribbon with 1 Bronze Star, Good Conduct Medal, Victory Ribbon.
3. Barnett, Jerald Dean, Cpl., 28th Engr. Sqd., 25th Service Group, entered Nov. 12, 1942, discharged Nov. 23, 1945. Campaigns—Air Offensive Japan, China, India, Burma, Western Pacific. Decorations—Distinguished Unit Badge, American Theater Campaign Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal with 4 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct, Victory Ribbon, 1 service stripe, 3 overseas service bars.
4. Barnett, William Guy, Staff Sgt., Bt. 556 Railroad Operating Bt., entered June, 1943, went overseas May, 1944, now stationed in Belgium.
5. Biggs, Bilbo M. Sgt., 855th Air Eng. Sqd., entered Sept. 13, 1940, discharged Sept. 22, 1945. Decorations—Bronze Star Medal, American Defense Medal, Good Conduct Medal, EAME Ribbon.
6. Bing, Byron Udell, M/Sgt., 765 Bomber Sqd. (E), entered May 22, 1941, discharged July 11, 1945. Campaigns—Rome-Arno, Rhineland, Southern France, North Apennines, Normandy, Po Valley, Air Combat Balkans, Northern France. Decorations—Good Conduct Medal, Distinguished Unit Badge with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, American Defense Service Medal.
7. Booker, Ben, Sgt., 110 3rd AAF 13V, entered March, 1943, discharged Dec. 6, 1945. Decorations—American Theater, Good Conduct Medal, Victory Medal.
8. Bohannon, Charlie Thomas.
9. Boykin, Ezra E. R.
10. Campbell, Albert.

11. Chamberlin, Samuel Zebedie, Pfc., 82nd Paratroop Infantry, entered Nov., 1942, discharged Jan. 20, 1946. Campaigns—Bastogne, Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe. Decorations—Campaign Medal, 3 Bronze Stars, 3 Victory Ribbons, Distinguished Unit Badge, French Campaign Ribbon, Belgium Campaign Ribbon (the highest honor conferred by the Belgium Government), English Campaign Ribbon, Oak Leaf Cluster, Good Conduct. Lost for 89 days behind enemy lines, but made way back to company.
12. Chambless, Annette J., WAC, Cpl., 450th Air Force Base Unit, entered Jan. 29, 1944, discharged Dec. 5, 1945. Decorations—Victory Ribbon, American Theater Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal.
13. Chambless, Lee Roy, Cpl., 704th Inf. Division, 1st Army, entered March 11, 1942. Campaigns—Northern France, Rhineland, Central Europe. Decorations—American Service Medal, European African Medal Eastern Service, Good Conduct, Victory Medal.
14. Crouch, H. K., Pfc., 102nd Division Headquarters, entered Nov., 1944, discharged March 18, 1946. Campaigns—Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe. Decorations—2 Purple Hearts, Unit Citation Badge. Wounded in Germany.
15. Danford, Lester C., entered Nov. 18, 1941. Served in European Theater with 355th Engineers. Decorations—5 Battle Stars, Good Conduct Medal.
16. Dixon, Ernest Welborn.
17. Ellis, Edd.
18. Eldredge, James Bruce, Air Corps.
19. Gill, John T., Jr., T/Sgt., 394th Bomb Sqd., 5th Bomb Group, entered Oct. 12, 1942, discharged Nov. 3, 1946. Campaigns—Bismarck Archipelago, China, New Guinea, South Philippines, (Liberation) Luzon. Decorations—American Theater, Asiatic-Pacific Theater, W/1 Silver Star, Philippine Liberation with 1 Bronze Star, Good



Conduct Medal, Air Medal W/3 Bronze Clusters, Victory Medal.

20. Gist, Jack D., Cpl., 34th Bombardment Group, 4th Bombardment Sqd., entered Feb. 16, 1943, discharged Oct. 14, 1945. Campaigns—Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe, Air Offensive Europe. Decorations—EAME Campaign Ribbon with 6 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal, 2 overseas service bars.
21. Gleason, Robert L., Pvt., 81st Inf., entered July 24, 1944, discharged Sept. 9, 1944.
22. Gore, Charlie, entered June 6, 1944.
23. Grant, William T., T/S, 3rd Armored Division, 83 Reconnaissance Bt., entered Sept. 11, 1943, discharged Nov. 1, 1945. Campaigns—Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes, Germany. Decorations—4 Campaign Stars, Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Good Conduct Medal. Wounded Dec. 27, 1944, in Belgium at Bastogne.
24. Hertel, Paul, Pvt., entered Feb. 26, 1946. Stationed two years in Hawaii with FBI.
25. Hester, Travis Tonie, Medical Corps.
26. Keils, Roy Elmer.
27. Johnson, G. W., Pfc., AAF Bu Alamogordo, N.M., entered Oct. 23, 1942, discharged Jan. 5, 1946. Decorations—American Theater, Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal.
28. Johnson, Lankster Gordon.
29. Key, Robert Lee, Jr., Pfc., Medical Corps, stationed in Germany.
30. Killough, Avery.
31. Lambright, Jim.
32. Lammons, A. D., T/S, entered March 2, 1942, discharged Sept. 15, 1945.

33. Lammons, J. C., entered July 3, 1942, discharged Dec. 22, 1945. Army of Occupation. Good Conduct Medal.
34. Laningham, Dave Regan, Pfc., 90th QM. Co., entered March 13, 1942, discharged Oct. 22, 1945. Campaigns—Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe. Decorations—EAME Campaign Medal with 3 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal.
35. Laningham, Ernest V., T-5, 64th Armored Inf. Bt., entered March 13, 1942, discharged Oct. 24, 1945. Campaigns—Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe. Decorations—European African Middle Eastern Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Star Medal.
36. Laningham, Samuel S., Sgt., 350th Inf., entered Oct. 5, 1942, discharged June 12, 1945. Campaigns—Rome-Arno Campaign, Naples, Feggial Campaign. Decorations—EAMET Ribbon, Good Conduct Ribbon.
37. Lawrence, Thomas P., Sgt., 1071st AAF Base Unit, entered Dec. 26, 1941, discharged Jan. 2, 1945. Decorations—Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, American Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal.
38. Leathers, Julian Paul, 1/Sgt., 390th Inf. Headquarters, entered March 22, 1943, discharged Feb. 15, 1946. Decorations—American Theater Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Victory Ribbon with 3 overseas service bars.
39. Lincoln, Robert Lee, Pfc., Medical Det., 951st Antiaircraft Artillery, entered Oct. 2, 1943, discharged Oct. 22, 1945. Campaigns—So. Philippines Luzon. Decorations—Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 2 Bronze Stars, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, 2 overseas service bars.
40. Long, Leonard C., Pvt., Infantry, entered July 21, 1944, discharged July 8, 1945. Decorations—Asiatic-Pacific Service Medal.
41. Maddux, David Ross.

42. Maddux, William Douglas, 1/Sgt., 47th Quartermaster Co., entered April 18, 1942, discharged Dec. 5, 1945. Campaigns — Tunisia, Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Northern Apennines, Po Valley. Decorations—EAME Campaign Medal with 5 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Victory Ribbon, 1 Service stripe, 5 overseas service bars, 1 Bronze Arrow Head, American Theater Campaign Medal.
43. Magouirk, Travis Lee, Antiaircraft, entered April 10, 1943, stationed in France.
44. Manning, Henry, Jr.
45. Mobley, O'Neal C., S/Sgt., 403rd Bomb Sqd., entered May 12, 1942, discharged June 19, 1945. Campaigns—Bismarck Archipelago, North Solomons, New Guinea, So. Philippines, Luzon. Decorations—Good Conduct Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 5 Bronze Stars, Philippine Liberation Ribbon with 1 Bronze Star, Air Medal with 6 Oak Leaf Clusters.
46. Moore, Joe Earl.
47. Moore, John Stanford.
48. Moore, Milton Cross, Pfc., C 941st FABN, entered April 16, 1942, discharged Nov. 29, 1945. Campaigns—Northern France, Rhineland, Central Europe. Decorations—American Theater Campaign Medal, EAME Campaign Medal with 3 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal, World War II Victory Medal.
49. Morgan, Charley A., Cpl., 976th Air Eng. Sqd., entered Sept. 29, 1942, discharged Oct. 19, 1945. Campaigns—Rome-Arno, Northern Apennines. Decorations—American Theater Ribbon, Meritorious Service Unit Plaque, Good Conduct Ribbon, EAMET Service Ribbon.
50. Mullenax, Otha W., T-5, 2nd Signal Bn., entered Feb. 19, 1942, discharged Oct. 31, 1945. Campaigns—Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe. Decorations—EAME Campaign Medal with 3 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal, 1 service stripe, 3

overseas service bars, American Theater Campaign Medal.

51. Mullenax, Vallie, S/Sgt., 337th Infantry, entered July 9, 1940, discharged Aug. 8, 1945. Campaigns—North Apennines, Po Valley, Rome-Arno. Decorations—EAME Campaign Medal with 3 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal, American Defense Service Medal, Bronze Star Medal.
52. Murdock, William Earnest.
53. Neely, Frank Alfred.
54. Neely, Jack Ellis.
55. Perry John Sherman, Medical Corps, discharged 1944.
56. Pierce, Lloyd.
57. Parnell, Jimmy Lee, Cpl., Army Aid Corps, entered May 13, 1943, discharged Jan. 4, 1946. Campaigns—Saipan, Guam, Iwo Jima. Decorations—3 Battle Stars, Presidential Citation, Good Conduct Medal.
58. Perry, Shirley B., Pfc., 3rd Military Government Regt., entered Jan. 17, 1942, discharged Oct. 20, 1945. Campaigns—Northern France, Rhineland, Central Europe. Decorations—1 service stripe, 3 overseas service bars, American Defense Service Ribbon, EAME Campaign Ribbon with 3 Bronze Stars.
59. Pitts, Edwin Thompson.
60. Pitts, John J., Army Air Force.
61. Pitts, Thomas Blaine, T/Sgt., entered 1937. Decorations—DFC for "extraordinary achievement" while serving as a top turret gunner-engineer of a Flying Fortress, Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters.
62. Pitts, William, Pvt., 23rd A1B Bn. Med. Det., entered March 15, 1943, discharged Oct. 18, 1945. Campaigns—Rhineland and Central Europe. Decorations—EAME Theater Medal, Good Conduct Medal.

63. Rabe, Vernon L., Pfc., entered March 11, 1942, discharged August 17, 1945. Decoration—Good Conduct Medal.
64. Radford, Robert Lee.
65. Richmond, Glenn Edward, T-5, entered June 12, 1944, discharged Jan. 26, 1946. Campaigns—Rhineland. Decorations—EAME Campaign Medal with 1 Bronze Star, Good Conduct Medal, Purple Heart, World War II Victory Ribbon. Wounded EAME March 11, 1945.
66. Richmond, Lloyd David, Cpl., entered July 6, 1943, discharged March 17, 1946. Army of Occupation. Good Conduct Medal.
67. Rozelle, Lester Hoover, Sgt., 152nd Inf., entered Oct. 29, 1942, discharged Aug. 27, 1945. Campaigns—New Guinea, So. Philippines, Luzon. Decorations—Combat Badge.
68. Robertson, Benjamin E., Jr., Cpl., entered June 22, 1942, discharged Feb. 10, 1945. Campaigns—Sicilian and Italian Campaign. Decorations—European-African-Middle-Eastern Campaign with 2 Bronze Stars for Sicilian and Italian Campaign, Good Conduct Medal, 3 overseas service bars.
69. Redding, James R., Cpl., entered May, 1945, Army of Occupation in Germany.
70. Redding, Joe, S/Sgt., 9th Air Corps, entered Jan. 6, 1943, discharged Dec. 2, 1945. Overseas 21 months. Decorations—5 Battle Stars, Presidential Citation, ETO.
71. Roberts, Walter.
72. Russell, Lee Elton.
73. Scott, Alvie C., T/5, 70th Division, 7th Army, entered Nov., 1943. Campaign—Saar Basin. Decorations—Good Conduct Medal, Expert Rifle Medal, European Theater Ribbon and Bronze Star Medal.
74. Shaw, Cecil William.



75. Shaw, Henderson.
76. Sinclair, Duncan Wesley, 1/Sgt., entered 1937, discharged 1944.
77. Sinclair, Lynn, Sgt., 53rd Ordnance, entered June 17, 1942, discharged Oct. 22, 1945. Campaigns—Rome-Arno, North Apennines, Po Valley. Decorations—EAME Campaign Medal with 3 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal, 1 service strips, 3 overseas service bars. 5th Army Ammunition Front Line Supplies.
78. Smith, William Zeptha.
79. Squires, Charlie William.
80. Squires, Travis.
81. Stroud, George Ethan, Jr., Staff-Sgt., L gunner, Army Air Force Base Unit, entered May 27, 1943, discharged Oct. 12, 1945. Campaigns—Normandy, Northern France, Southern France, Rhineland. Decorations—DFC for "extraordinary achievement" while serving as Waist Gunner on a B-17 on a number of combat bombardment missions over German occupied countries, Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, EAME Ribbon with 4 Stars, Victory Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal. Stroud was made a member of the Caterpillar Club in recognition of the emergency parachute made.
82. Thompson, Edwin Roy.
83. Torrey, Sam.
84. Walters, Joe Terrell.
85. Walston, Kimble.
86. Winchester, Marion Gunn.
87. Westbrook, Fred D., Pvt., Medical Dept., entered Oct. 21, 19.., discharged Jan. 6, 1944.
88. Upton, Lawrence Claude, entered 1942. Chaplain.
89. Franklin, Ernest L.

90. Frazier, Roland, Pfc., entered 1945.
91. Yerby, James M., Cpl., 440th Signal Heavy Coast Bn., entered Nov. 21, 1942, discharged Nov. 20, 1945. Campaigns—Bismarck Archipelago, New Guinea, Luzon, Ryukyus. Decorations—Victory Ribbon, 1 service stripe, Asiatic-Pacific Theater Campaign Medal with 4 Bronze Stars, Philippine Liberation Medal with 1 Bronze Star, Good Conduct Medal, 5 overseas service bars.
92. West, Allie J.

### *The Navy*

#### OFFICERS' SECTION:

1. Danford, Masil B., Lt. (j.g.), U.S.N.R., entered July 1, 1943. Served in European Theater until March, 1944; now Commanding Officer on 861 L.S.T. in Pacific.
2. Wiley, Roddy Rawls, Ensign, Line Officer, entered May, 1945. Stationed at Guam.

### *Merchant Marines*

1. Scarborough, Quentin, Ensign, entered Feb., 1944. Good Conduct Medal and others. Was at Guam during the campaign of that island.

#### ENLISTED MEN:

1. Campbell, Ray, Chief Boatswain, entered Jan. 8, 1934. Campaigns—Leiti, Luzon, Mindanao, Pelew. Served 12 years in the Pacific, eight aboard the U.S.S. Saratoga which was torpedoed in Jan., 1942. Decorations—Bronze Star Medal, Presidential Citation, Silver Star Medal.
2. Barnes, Joe Wylma, C.M.M. Served 8 years in the Navy. He was at Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941, and afterward received a Citation. Participated in the Kisku Invasion, Komandarshi Island, Cape Gloucester, Bargaen Bay, New Britain, Madang, Las Negas Island, Huawei Island, Manus Island, Halmahera Island, Solomon Islands including Guadalcanal, Coral Sea, and Leyte.

3. Danford, Gerald P., C.R.M., entered Nov. 30, 1941. Took active part in European and Asiatic invasions. Now in atomic area.
4. Danford, Merle Scott, JM 2/C, entered Dec. 8, 1943. Served in Pacific; has 2 Battle Stars.
5. Dorman, Cecil, 1/C gunner, entered June 1, 1942, discharged Jan., 1946. Was among the 1,000 volunteers known as the "Avengers" of the U.S.S. Houston.
6. Edwards, William Stroud (Billy), Seaman 1/C, entered May, 1945.
7. Fields, John Calvin, Seaman 1/C, entered Sept. 18, 1943, discharged Feb. 2, 1946.
8. Frazier, Bill, entered July, 1945.
9. Lipsey, Oscar Colquitt, M Mtc (T) (CR) (Seabeas), entered Oct. 7, 1942, discharged Oct. 3, 1945. Stationed in New Guinea, Leyte, Samar.
10. Irons, Gene Clinton, Coxswain (3/C Petty Officer), entered April 26, 1944. Campaigns—Liberation of Philippines, Leyte, Luzon, New Guinea, Saipan. Decorations—3 Ribbons and 2 Bronze Stars. U.S.S. Tangier.
11. Hughes, Coleman, EM 1/C (Seaman), U.S.S. Enterprise, entered Dec. 5, 1941. The feats of the U.S.S. Enterprise are probably the most outstanding ones performed in the Pacific. A history of this ship was donated to the Oakwood High School Library by Coleman himself.
12. Jones, Bart.
13. Perry, Carroll Wayne, entered 1945, Medical Corps.
14. Pennington, Edward, Machinist 1/C, entered Sept., 1942. U.S.S. Stoddard. Invasion of Japan. Decorations—Good Conduct Medal and several stars.
15. Reynolds, Charles, entered 1941, discharged 1942.
16. Springer, George Lee, Seaman 1/C, entered April 27, 1944, discharged Feb. 9, 1946. U.S.S. Buchanan.

17. Tacker, Frank S., Jr., Seaman 1/C, entered March 16, 1945, discharged March 11, 1946 Campaigns—Okinawa. Decorations—1 star.
18. Thompson, John W.
19. Tubb, Robert Ray, Gunner's Mate 3/C, U.S.N.R., entered June 29, 1944, discharged March 25, 1946. Campaigns—American Area Campaign, Asiatic-Pacific Area (Okinawa), Philippine Liberation, Occupation of Japan. Decorations—2 Battle Stars, World War II Victory Medal.
20. Vannatta, M. E., Aviation Radioman 1/C, entered Aug. 27, 1942.
21. Weisinger, Melvin.
22. Weisinger, Roland.
23. Yerby, John Hardy, Aviation Radioman 3/C, entered Nov. 8, 1943, discharged Feb. 21, 1946. U.S.S. St. George. Decorations—3 Campaign Bars.

### *Marines*

1. Chamberlain, George Raymond, Pfc., entered Nov. 17, 1942, discharged Oct. 19, 1945. Stationed at Pearl Harbor.
2. Chavers, Lee, Pvt.
3. Dorman, Roger, Sgt., entered March 25, 1941, discharged 1946. Was captured at Wake in the heroic defense of the island which tapped out its last message, "Send us more Japs." Held prisoner from Dec. 23, 1941, to Sept. 14, 1945, when he was released from Hakodate Branch Camp No. 3 at Utashinai, Hokkaido, Japan. Decorations—Presidential Citation, 3 Battle Stars, Bronze Star Medal, Good Conduct Medal.
4. Haley, Alton W., Cpl., entered 1943, discharged Aug., 1945. Saipan, Tinian.
5. Hester, Steven Albert, Sgt., entered Sept. 20, 1942, dis-

charged Oct. 31, 1945. Campaigns—New Georgia, Consolidation of North Solomon Islands. Decorations—Navy Accommodation Medal, Presidential Citation, 2 Bronze Stars for American Defense and Asiatic-Pacific, Good Conduct Medal.

6. Hester, Donald Eugene.
7. Lipsey, Ronald, Staff Sgt., entered June 8, 1944, discharged Aug. 29, 1945.
8. Lipsey, Samuel Archie, Jr., 1/Sgt., entered Sept. 12, 1942, discharged Oct. 12, 1945. Campaigns—Saipan, Guam, Tinian, Philippines, Luzon, Leyte. Decorations—4 Campaign Stars.
9. Smith, Odell Hamilton.

#### *Merchant Marines*

1. Dorman, Duncan, Jr., entered April, 1945. Transferred to Marines, Pvt.
2. Perry, Radie Floyd, entered 1943.
3. Stroud, James Robert, Seaman 2/C, entered 1945. Campaigns—Okinawa.

#### *Coast Guard*

1. Russell, Louis Terrell, Cox (R), entered Aug. 8, 1942, discharged Nov. 13, 1945. Campaigns—American Theater, Asiatic-Pacific Theater, Philippine Liberation. Decorations—2 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal.

#### *In Memoriam*

1. Bing, Bradford Lee, Pfc., Anti-Tank Bt., 7th Army. On Jan. 23, 1945, he gave his life for his country in the Battle of the Bulge of the French Campaign.
2. Crowell, James Burgos.
3. Dickey, Harvey, Lee, Jr., Sgt., Army Air Corps, entered Dec., 1942, was killed April 1, 1944, over France.



4. Frazier, Weldon, S/Sgt., Gunner, entered Army Air Corps in 1938, killed in plane crash off New Guinea, 1944.
5. Haley, Bradley Knowles, T/Sgt., entered 1940, 91st Division, 5th Army. Killed July 17, 1944, in Italy.
6. Rambo, Maudie Marcellus.
7. Tubb, Barton, Pilot on P-51, 11th Bomber Group, Army Air Corps. Stationed at Waycross, Ga. Killed in cross-country flight March 21, 1943.

*Draft Board*

L. B. Bing, Oakwood

Fred B. Hall, Leona

Ed T. Sherman, Centerville

Mr. C. G. Haley of Centerville served from Oct., 1940, to April, 1941. Mr. V. D. Brown of Centerville served from April, 1941, until his death in Oct., 1943, at which time Mr. Ed T. Sherman became a member of the present board.

## CHAPTER X

### OAKWOOD TODAY

I don't want to get any lower than digging potatoes or any higher than pulling corn.

—*Mr. Elliot.*

TODAY OAKWOOD stands almost a replica of the Oakwood of forty years ago. The March winds still send the deep white sands swirling down the streets in clouds, and the buildings and the roads are the worse for wear, but all along its sidewalks are still seen the same old cronies—with a few exceptions—telling the same old tales on the same old people.

“Hello, Mr. Bob. How has yo’ been, Baby?” and I turn to see Blink, good old Blink, balanced atop a donkey and smiling pleasantly.

As a child I looked out the window of my school room and saw year after year an old negress scurrying across the school campus with a bundle of clothes balanced on her head or a basket of grapes tipping slightly from side to side, and following close behind her was a smaller negress with biased head, leery eyes, and toothpick legs nodding her head simultaneously with every step. Blink and Alice Velma!

Blink is well in her seventies and has had the same snuff-stained tooth hanging from her upper gum as far back as I can remember. When she told me a

short time ago that she was contemplating having it extracted and wearing false ones, I opposed the act in such a melancholy tone of voice that I think she actually took my unseasoned advice and took the opposite stand. Blink isn't just an ordinary negress. Somehow I feel that she must have come from a lineage of blacks that lived far back in the region of the head-hunters of darkest Africa. When her head is not topped by some large package, she wears some man's discarded hat and upon her feet his shoes with her bony black toes protruding through the holes. Her usual dress is a faded Mother Hubbard with various pockets inside for carrying bottles, snuff, etc., but I have at times seen her in a garb, not unfitting to her personality, of red and green lounging pajamas, more like a clown's suit, and the same mannish hat upon her head. Blink's occupation varies with the seasons of the year. I have never known her to work in the fields, though I am sure she has, but I have seen her peddle grapes, not to our house, for she always makes a gift of them to us and refuses against all protest to take money for them saying, "Lawd, no, chile, I ain't gonna take no money for them grapes. Yo daddy was too good to ole Blink," and her eyes fill with tears.

Then there are times that she plays the part of the midwife for expectant mother cows during the spring of the year. There is also the occupation of peddling other things of less mentionable nature, though those of us who really know the negro and his kind have

grown quite accustomed to his making profits on the side line, be it home-brew, regular corn liquor out of the fruit jar, or what have you. Somehow I have the closest feeling for old Blink. I have heard her slap her knee many a time and say in her jovial manner, "Lawd, there ain't never been another nigger like this one." And I think that she is certainly right.

Shortly after my father died, Blink spoke to me as usual one day, and said, "Lawd, chile, you is just like yo daddy. Yo is Mr. Bob." I appreciated her saying that. She couldn't have said anything more complimentary to me, but I always choke with emotion when I see her, for from that day on Blink always addressed me as "Mr. Bob."

Alice Velma is Blink's granddaughter. Blink was undecided just what name to give her liege, so she sought the advice of a white friend. "Miss Mattie," she asked, "what is Mr. Kay's wife name?" And when she was told her name was "Velma" then Blink replied, "Then I'll just name her 'Alice Velma,' 'Alice' for me and 'Velma' for Mr. Kay's wife." And so it was that the term became "Blink and Alice Velma."

I wouldn't say that Alice Velma is a nice looking negress, as everyone will agree, but it has been rumored that she took the beauty prize at Dunbar High. She later married Walking Willie and now that she has gained considerable weight someone asked Blink if they were not feeding Alice Velma well. Her

reply was, "I reckon they is. They is stuffin' her at both ends."

I hate to think that some day we shall have to lose Blink, for certainly she is most loyal to her whites, and she holds a place close to our hearts that could never be filled.

Where Rambo's Ark used to be, now stands Mr. Bennie Hardin's Variety Store, and what was R. L. Knowles' Hardware for forty years is now Stroud Brothers. And there sitting in that store window is Uncle Henry Lacy. At ninety-two he looks better than he did four years ago when I talked with him.

Uncle Henry Lacy was eighty-eight years old in the summer of 1942, and he, along with his many friends, realized that his time on earth was short. He had come to town now to spend his remaining days with his daughter, and had graciously consented to my interviewing him.

It was early one Saturday afternoon that my uncle and I wove our way down the narrow lanes which led through the negro quarters of the town to call on one of Oakwood's oldest and most remarkable historians though his color was black.

Uncle Henry was living now with one of his daughters in her humble shanty. The middle-aged negress was working among the flowers in her tiny garden as we approached the cabin. She looked up, her gold earrings flashing in the sun, smiled, and cordially invited us into her home. Saturday was the customary



day to go to town, but she had remained behind today to be with her father.

A feeling of reverence came over me as I saw seated before us an old man. His hair was white now, and it fringed only the sides and back of his head. His complexion was lighter than the African negro, probably denoting white blood far back in the line, and his face was dotted by an occasional mole. His watery eyes glistened, and he smiled as he invited us to be seated. Although he was ill, his voice came almost clear, and his brilliant, alert mind recalled vividly many events and dates, revealing him as one of the true pioneer historians of his time. As he talked, his conversation changed from subject to subject, but in spite of his many years, it was not too incoherent to understand. He faltered only a few times when asking us to repeat questions, but his deafness was only slight. His bony fingers rapped incessantly against the arm of his chair, and for two hours we sat rapt in the early history of our community, asking a question here and there.

Uncle Henry was born in East Texas, Rusk County, in the year 1855. He belonged to the Lacey family, but for some reason the master ran Henry's people out of the country and for a time they lived in Austin and San Antonio. The family was eventually sold to Church Gorman, who in turn sold them to Joe Bannerman who had a plantation on the west bank of the Trinity.

Henry was still a young boy when war was declared

in 1861, and he continued to live with his parents on the Bannerman plantation for several years. The war ended in '65 and though the slaves were emancipated on the 19th of June, it was not until July that they received the word that they were free.

Between 1867 and 1870 the only means of grinding corn was by a water mill at Keechie which was owned by the Lamfords. Henry often found himself seated behind four pairs of oxen hauling corn to the mill, and at the beginning of the war he had lost a finger in a corn crushing machine. Though Dr. Cruniby was called, it was necessary to amputate it. A little later a mill was brought from Galveston or Houston and was installed at Lake Port by a Mr. Strickland. It was only about ten miles from the Bannerman plantation going by Glaze Lake, where there was a ferry and post office, Caney Creek, and Cedar Creek on the old Butler-Magnolia Road.

On a Monday afternoon in 1872 or '73 Henry and a number of cotton pickers were on their way home when they saw Boog Hardin shoot and kill Bob Young at Navarro Crossing where there were at that time three stores and a race track. They stopped for the inquest which was held by Pat Anders. Bill Tennon, the sheriff, was an eyewitness to the killing and took Boog to the Fairfield jail. Boog Hardin was later shot on the streets of Jewett.

In about 1873 while Henry was picking cotton on the banks of Trinity River, he saw something big go up

the river, and running to the bank, he saw that it was a large houseboat. In 1871 or 72 he had seen Curry, a Dutch merchant, at Navarro build a steam flatboat, and likewise saw him tear it apart, for he was never able to turn it in the narrow river. Henry always liked to watch the boats steaming up and down the river, unloading their wares at various ports. By day, the roustabouts carried the supplies to be stored in large warehouses, and by night they were set off on the bank to be stored the following day. The captains seemed always to be unloading stoves which they set out on the ground to weather the scorching sun, the blinding rain, or the muddy waves lashing against the banks of the river.

Henry saw as a close observer and retained in his memory what he saw. Mr. Johnson had a store at Navarro and, being an old man and wishing to take life easier, put it in the hands of a man named Shotwell. Roe Moore was in "cahoots" with Shotwell, and they soon cleaned Mr. Johnson without his being aware of it. When all the money was gone, Shotwell turned the business back to Johnson. Shortly afterwards the High Sheriff of Galveston came up and when he told Mr. Johnson that he had come to close him up, it shocked Johnson so that he fell to his knees and had to be carried home. The sheriff arrested Roe Moore and tried to arrest Shotwell, but he got away. The sheriff left Roe Moore in the custody of Gun Eye, the bartender, while he went after Shotwell. Roe suddenly

pulled a gun on Gun Eye, jumped on his horse, and made his escape to San Antonio.

Joe Barnes of Jewett was going to buy out Henderson Hardin at St. Paul, but before the deal was closed, Henderson died and his property fell into the hands of his father, Dick Hardin. The gin which was first owned by Robert Mathis, a negro, was later bought by Henderson Hardin.

Robert Mathis was a pal of the Pruitt boys, who were not only bad boys, but horse thieves as well. One time one of the Pruitt boys and Long, who was said to have been a partner of Sam Bass<sup>1</sup> and was making a crop north of Oakwood while he was hiding out, rode up to a negro house in Freestone County near the Stroud Field and called out its owner, who was Jim Daniel. They had come to kill him, but when they fired on him, the bullet hit a fifty-cent piece in his pocket and saved his life.

Butler was the trading center for this part of the country for some time. The early settlers there were: Keils, Looney, Mobley, Mayes, Hooker, Parker, Waldrum, Murdock, Hammett, Whitt, Lane, and Love.

Much more irrelevant matter to the life of Henry himself was supplied by Uncle Henry but is included elsewhere in this book.

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<sup>1</sup>Sam Bass (July 21, 1851-July 21, 1878) was born in Indiana but became a famous Texas outlaw. Sam Bass, Seaborn Barnes, Frank Jackson, Jim Murphy, and others, among whom was possibly Long, were organized as a train crew. Bass was called the "conductor," Jackson the "engineer," etc. Jim Murphy betrayed Bass and he was killed in 1878 at Round Rock, where he is buried.



In 1892 Uncle Henry settled on his home place which he had bought from Mr. Jim Orenbaum, having moved there from the John Lammons' place. It was here that John Lammons and John Echols had a store. Henry married once, and in all he had about twenty children, legitimate and otherwise.

But up there where those three men are sitting on the bench—they're Mr. Bob Holloway, Mr. Hunter Carrington, and Mr. Bill Moore—there's a vacant place. Mr. Bob's pointing with his right hand to those two dogs. I'd like to bet that he's wagering the yellow one gets the bone away from the black.

Just beyond there stands Mr. Deck Moore still chewing on that cigar, and he's got Mr. Biggs keeping store while he goes to the post office. I don't guess Mr. Deck could ever count the nickels he gave us out of his cash drawer nor all the ice cream we ate out of his freezer.

Looks like John (Solomon) would get tired of that stool. He's been in Oakwood a long time—came over from Greece and settled here in 1917, and saves his pennies and takes them to the bank in gallon jars!

Seeing that boxcar on the track over there always reminds me of the story on one of the old-timers. A cow was killed on the railroad and when the company would not pay the owner for the cow, the Oakwoodian, indignant, locked one of their boxcars to the track.

Seeing that the chain was secure, he turned and made his way back across the street. Mr. Joe Barnes,



who stood watching him, asked, "Ethan, aren't you drunk?"

"Who, me?" replied Ethan. "Certainly I'm not drunk."

"Well, Ethan, you walked right through that mud puddle."

"Ah, you know me," bragged Ethan. "I never go around anything when I'm railroading."

And it was a long time before Ethan could be persuaded to let the boxcar go.

And there's Mr. Roddy Wiley sitting at his desk in the bank. It was right here on the bank corner where Uncle Tommy Ferguson used to sit.

One time when some strangers were inquiring of the food served in the local café, Uncle Tommy, though he had never been addressed himself, volunteered, "I never et anything there but once, and I wish I had never et it."

There where all the birds and flowers are is Dixon Drug Store. And that's the same old bench where Captain Waldrum and Mr. Gorman used to sit. And there's the little biscuit that used to sit at the intersections of the roads. I remember how Mr. Miller used to point and wave his cane in the air and make everybody turn and park right. Seeing those rocking chairs on the hotel porch makes it look natural too.

Seeing that barber pole brings back the time Charlie Ray (Tom) Colbert, when a child of three, pointed his little gun at a negro, pulled the trigger, and just as

the stopper left the barrel, the negro fell in a fit, and Charlie Ray thought he had killed him.

How many, many things have happened on this sidewalk.

Like the time we had a mad-dog scare and Spider Sinclair, who had been bitten by a dog and was taking the serum, filled his mouth with tooth paste and letting it foam out upon his lips began to chase Henry Weldon Tubbs down the street. The chase soon included Edgar Lee Haley, who being heavy-set and short of wind, soon fell exhausted. "By God, Spider," he gasped, "if you're going to bite me, bite."

That shop with all the bric-a-brac in the windows is Mrs. Tina Lambert's. There she is—still wearing her little high-necked collar!

How dear are all these memories! How close to our hearts are all these old characters—these unforgettable characters. The streets are a little rougher, and the weeds grow higher than they used to grow, and there are piles of old cans in the streets now, and the houses are beginning to crumble, but fundamentally Oakwood is the same.

Be it ever so humble  
There is no place like home.

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